TAXI DRIVER

BY

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"The whole conviction of my life now rests upon the belief that loneliness, far from being a rare and curious phenomenon, is the central and inevitable fact of human existence."

--Thomas Wolfe,
"God's Lonely Man"

TRAVIS BICKLE, age 26, lean, hard, the consummate loner. On the surface he appears good-looking, even handsome; he has a quiet steady look and a disarming smile which flashes from nowhere, lighting up his whole face. But behind that smile, around his dark eyes, in his gaunt cheeks, one can see the ominous stains caused by a life of private fear, emptiness and loneliness. He seems to have wandered in from a land where it is always cold, a country where the inhabitants seldom speak. The head moves, the expression changes, but the eyes remain ever-fixed, unblinking, piercing empty space.

Travis is now drifting in and out of the New York City night life, a dark shadow among darker shadows. Not noticed, no reason to be noticed, Travis is one with his surroundings. He wears rider jeans, cowboy boots, a plaid western shirt and a worn beige Army jacket with a patch reading, "King Kong Company, 1968-70."

He has the smell of sex about him: sick sex, repressed sex, lonely sex, but sex nonetheless. He is a raw male force, driving forward; toward what, one cannot tell. Then one looks closer and sees the evitable. The clock spring cannot be wound continually tighter. As the earth moves toward the sun, Travis Bickle moves toward violence.

TRAVIS GETS A JOB

1. FILM OPENS on EXT. of MANHATTAN CAB GARAGE. Weather-beaten sign above driveway reads, "Taxi Enter Here". Yellow cabs scuttle in and out. It is WINTER, snow is piled or piled on the curbs, the wind is howling.

2. INSIDE GARAGE are parked row upon row of multi-colored taxis. Echoing SOUNDS of cabs idling, cabbies talking. Steamy breath and exhaust fill the air.

3. INT. CORRIDOR of cab company offices. Lettering on ajar door reads:

PERSONNEL OFFICE

Mavis Cab Company
Blue and White Cab Co.
Acme Taxi
Dependable Taxi Services
JRB Cab Company
Speedo Taxi Service

SOUND of office busywork: shuffling, typing, arguing.

4. PERSONNEL OFFICE is a cluttered disarray. Sheets with heading "Mavis, B&W, Acme" and so forth are tacked to crumbling plaster wall: it is March. Desk is cluttered with forms, reports and an old upright Royal typewriter.

Disheveled middle-aged New Yorker looks up from the desk.

5 We CUT IN to ongoing conversation between the middle-aged PERSONNEL OFFICER and a YOUNG MAN standing in front on his desk.

The young man is TRAVIS BICKLE. He wears his jeans, boots and Army jacket. He takes a drag off his unfiltered cigarette

The PERSONNEL OFFICER is beat and exhausted: he arrives at work exhausted. TRAVIS is something else again. His intense steely gaze is enough to jar even the PERSONNEL OFFICER out of his workaday boredom.

PERSONNEL OFFICER (O.S.)
No trouble with the Hack Bureau?

TRAVIS (O.S.)
No Sir.

PERSONNEL OFFICER (O.S.)
Got your license?

TRAVIS (O.S.)
Yes.

5 CONTINUED

PERSONNEL OFFICER
So why do you want to be a taxi-driver?

TRAVIS
I can't sleep nights.

PERSONNEL OFFICER
There's porno theatres for that.

continued

5 CONTD

TRAVIS
I know. I tried that.

The PERSONNEL OFFICER, though officious, is mildly probing and curious. TRAVIS is a cipher, cold and distant. He speaks as if his mind doesn't know what his mouth is saying.

PERSONNEL OFFICER
So whatja do now?

TRAVIS
I ride around nights mostly. Subways, buses. See things. Figur'd I might as well get paid for it.

PERSONNEL OFFICER
We don't need any misfits around here, son.

A thin smile cracks almost indiscernably across TRAVIS' lips.

TRAVIS
You kiddin? Who else would hack through South Bronx or Harlem at night?

PERSONNEL OFFICER
You want to work uptown nights?

TRAVIS
I'll work anywhere, anytime. I know I can't be choosy.

PERSONNEL OFFICER
(thinks a moment)
How's your driving record?

TRAVIS
Clean. Real clean.
(pause, thin smile)
As clean as my conscience.

PERSONNEL OFFICER
Listen, son, you gonna get smart, you can leave right now.

TRAVIS
(apologetic)
Sorry, sir. I didn't mean that.

5 CONTINUED (2)

PER PERSONNEL OFFICER
Physical? Criminal?

TRAVIS
Also clean.

PERSONNEL OFFICER
Age?

TRAVIS
Twenty-six?

PERSONNEL OFFICER
Education?

TRAVIS
Some. Here and there.

PERSONNEL OFFICER
Military Record?

TRAVIS
Honorable discharge. May,1971.

PERSONNEL OFFICER
You moonlightin?

TRAVIS
No, I want long shifts.

PERSONNEL OFFICER
(casually, almost to himself)
We hire a lot of moonlighters here.

TRAVIS
So I hear.

PERSONNEL OFFICER
(looks up at TRAVIS)
Hell, we ain't that much fussy anyway. There's always openings on one fleet or another.
(rummages through his drawer, collecting various pink, yellow and white forms)
Fill out these forms and give them to the girl at the desk, and leave your phone number. You gotta phone?

TRAVIS
No.

5 CONTD (3)

PERSONNEL OFFICER
Well then check back tomorrow.

TRAVIS
Yes, sir.

CUT TO:

CREDITS

6 CREDITS appear over scenes from MANHATTAN NIGHTLIFE. The snow has melted; it is SPRING.

7 A rainy, slick, wet miserable night in Manhattan's theatre district. Cabs and umbrellas are congested everywhere; well-dressed pedestrians are pushing, running, waving down taxis. The high-class theatre patrons crowding out of the midtown shows are shocked to find that the same rain that falls on the poor and common is also falling on them.

8 The unremitting SOUNDS of HONKING and SHOUTING play against the dull pitter-patter of rain. The glare of yellow, red and green lights reflects off the pavements and autos.

9 "When it rains, the boss of the City is the taxi-driver" -- so goes the cabbie's maxim, proven true by this particular night's activity. Only the taxis seem to rise above the situation: they glide effortlessly through the rain and traffic, picking up whom they choose, spurning whom they choose, going where they please.

10 Further uptown, the crowds are neither so frantic nor so glittering. The rain also falls on the street bums and the aged poor. Junkies still stand around on rainy street corners, hookers still prowl rainy sidewalks. And the taxis service them too.

All through the CREDITS the exterior SOUNDS are muted, as if coming from a distant room or storefront around the corner. The listener is at a safe but privileged distance.

11 After examining various strata of Manhattan nightlife, CAMERA begins to CLOSE IN on one particular taxi, and it is assumed that this taxi is being driven by TRAVIS BICKLE.

END CREDITS

CUT TO:

WE MEET TRAVIS

12 TRAVIS' yellow taxi pulls in foreground. On left rear door are lettered the words "Dependable Taxi Service."

We are somewhere in the upper Fifties on Fifth Ave. The rain has not let up.

13 AN ELDERLY WOMAN climbs in the right rear door, crushing her umbrella. TRAVIS waits a moment, then pulls away from the curb with a start.

14 Later, we see TRAVIS' taxi speeding down the rain-slicked avenue. The action is periodically accompanied by TRAVIS' narration. He is reading from a haphazard personal diary.

TRAVIS VOICE OVER
(monotone)
April 10, 1972. Thank God for the rain which has helped wash the garbage and trash off the sidewalks.

15 TRAVIS' P.O.V. of sleazy midtown side street: bums, hookers, junkies.

TRAVIS (V.O.) (Contd)
I'm working a single now, which means stretch-shifts, six to six, sometimes six to eight in the a.m., six days a week.

16 A MAN IN BUSINESS SUIT hails TRAVIS to the curb.

TRAVIS (V.O.) (Contd)
It's a hustle, but it keeps me busy. I can take in three to three-fifty a week, more with skims.

17 MAN IN BUSINESS SUIT, now seated in back seat, speaks up:

MAN IN BUSINESS SUIT
(urgent)
Is Kennedy operating, cabbie? Is it grounded?

On seat next to TRAVIS is half-eaten cheeseburger and order of french fries. He puts his cigarette down and gulps as he answers:

TRAVIS
Why should it be grounded?

17 CONTD

MAN IN BUSINESS SUIT
Listen -- I mean I just saw the needle of the Empire State Building. You can't see it for the fog!

TRAVIS
Then it's a good guess it's grounded.

MAN IN BUSINESS SUIT
The Empire State in fog means something, don't it? Do you know or don't you? What is your number, cabbie?

TRAVIS
Have you tried the telephone?

MAN IN BUSINESS SUIT
(hostile, impatient)
There isn't time for that. In other words, you don't know.

TRAVIS
No.

MAN IN BUSINESS SUIT
Well, you should know, damn it, or who else would know? Pull over right here.
(points out window)
Why don't you stick your goddamn head out of the goddamn window once in a while and find out about the goddamn fog!

18 TRAVIS pulls to the curb. The BUSINESS MAN stuffs a dollar bill into the pay drawer and jumps out of the cab. He turns to hail another taxi.

MAN IN BUSINESS SUIT
Taxi! Taxi!

TRAVIS writes up his trip card and drives away.

19 It is LATER THAT NIGHT. The rain has turned to drizzle. TRAVIS drives through another section of Manhattan.

TRAVIS (V.O.)
I work the whole city, up, down, don't make no difference to me -- does to some.

19 CONTD

STREETSIDE: TRAVIS' P.O.V. Black PROSTITUTE wearing white vinyl boots, leopard-skin mini-skirt and blond wig hails taxi. On her arm hangs half-drunk seedy EXECUTIVE TYPE.

TRAVIS pulls over.

20 PROSTITUTE and JOHN climb into back seat. TRAVIS checks out the action in rear view mirror.

TRAVIS (V.O.) (Contd)
Some won't take spooks -- Hell, don't make no difference to me.

TRAVIS' taxi drives through Central Park.

21 GRUNTS, GROANS coming from back seat. HOOKER and JOHN going at it in back seat. He's having a hard time and she's probably trying to get him to come off manually.

JOHN (O.S.)
Oh baby, baby.

PROSTITUTE (O.S.)
(forceful)
Come on.

TRAVIS stares blankly ahead.

CUT TO:

22 TRAVIS' APARTMENT. CAMERA PANS SILENTLY across INT. room, indicating this is not a new scene.

TRAVIS is sitting at plain table writing. He wears shirt, jeans, boots. An unfiltered cigarette rests in a bent coffee can ash tray.

22A CLOSE UP of notebook. It is a plain lined dimestore notebook and the words TRAVIS is writing with a stubby pencil, are those he is saying. The columns are straight, disciplined. Some of the writing is in pencil, some in ink. The handwriting is jagged.

CAMERA continues to PAN, examining TRAVIS' apartment. It is unusual, to say the least:

A ratty old mattress is thrown against one wall. The floor is littered with old newspapers, worn and unfolded street maps and pornography. The pornography is of the sort that looks cheap but costs $10 a throw -- black and white photos of naked women tied and gagged with

22 CONTD

black leather straps and clothesline. There is no furniture other than the rickety chair and table. A beat-up portable TV rests on an upright melon crate. The red silk mass in another corner looks like a Vietnamese flag. Indecipherable words, figures, numbers are scribbled on the plain plaster walls. Ragged black wires dangle from the wall where the telephone once hung.

TRAVIS (V.O.)
They're all animals anyway. All the animals come out at night: whores, skunk pussies, buggers, queens, fairies, dopers, junkies, sick, venal.
(a beat)
Someday a real rain will come and wash all this scum off the streets.

23 It's EARLY MORNING: 6 a.m. The air is clean and fresh and the streets nearly deserted.

24 EXT. of TAXI GARAGE. TRAVIS' taxi pulls into the driveway.

TRAVIS (V.O.) (Contd)
Each night when I return the cab to the garage I have to clean the come off the back seat. Some nights I clean off the blood.

25 INT. of TAXI GARAGE. TRAVIS pulls his taxi into garage stall. TRAVIS reaches across the cab and extracts a small vial of bennies from the glove compartment.

TRAVIS stands next to the cab, straightens his back, and tucks the bottle of pills into his jacket pocket. He lowers his head, looks into back seat, opens rear door and bends inside.
He shakes a cigarette out of his pack of camels and lights it.

26 Slight TIMECUT" TRAVIS books it at garage office. Old, rotting slabs of wood are screwed to a grey crumbling concrete wall. Each available space is covered with hand-lettered signs, time schedules, check-out sheets, memos. The signs read:

BE ALERT!!
THE SANE DRIVER
IS ALWAYS READY
FOR THE UNEXPECTED

26 CONTINUED

ALL NIGHT DRIVERS
HAVING PERSONAL INJURY
ACCIDENTS
MUST PHONE IN AT ONCE TO
JUDSON 2-3410
AND MUST FILE A REPORT Promptly
AT 9 AM THE FOLLOWING MORNING AT
43 W. 61st.

SLOW DOWN
AND GAUGE SPEED TO
ROAD CONDITIONS
YOU CAN'T STOP
ON A DIME!

A half dozen haggard cabbies hand around the office. Their shirts are wrinkled, their heads dropping, the mouths incessantly chattering. We pick up snatches of cabbie small talk:

1st CABBIE
...hadda piss like a bull steer, so I pull over on 10th Ave, yank up the hood and do the engine job.
(gestures as if taking a piss into the hood)
There I am with my dong in my hand when a guy come up and asks if I need any help. "Just checking the battery," I says, and, meanwhile...
(takes imaginary piss)

2nd CABBIE
If he thinks I'm going up into The Jungle this time of night, he can shove it.

3rd CABBIE
(talking into pay phone)
Fuck that Violets First. Fucking saddle horse. No, no, the OTB. Fuck them. No, is was TKR. TCR and I'da made seven fucking grand. Fuck them too. Alright, what about the second race?

4th CABBIE
Over at Love, this hooker took on the whole garage. Blew the whole fucking joint and they wouldn't even let her use the drinking fountain.

Travis hands his trip sheet to a CAB OFFICIAL, nods slightly, turns and walks toward the door.

27 OUTSIDE, TRAVIS walks pleasantly down Broadway, his hands in his jacket pockets. The sidewalks are deserted, except for diligent fruit and vegetable VENDORS setting up their stalls. He takes a deep breath of fresh air, pulls a white pill from his pocket, pops it into his mouth.

28 TRAVIS turns a corner, keeps walking. Ahead of him is

(to be continued

28 CONTINUED
a 24-hour PORNO THEATRE. The theatre, a blaze of cheap day-glow reds and yellows, is an offense to the clear, crisp morning air. The permanent lettering reads, "Adam Theater. 16 mm Sound Features" Underneath, today's features are hand-lettered: "Six-Day Cruise" and "Beaver Dam".

TRAVIS stops at the box office, purchases a ticket, and walks in.

29 INT. PORNO THEATRE

TRAVIS stands in the aisle for a moment. He turns around, walking back toward the concession stand.

30 CONCESSION STAND

A plain dumpy-looking GIRL sits listlessly on a stool behind the shabby concesssion stand. A plaster-of-paris Venus de Milo sits atop a piece of purple velvet cloth on the counter. The SOUND of the feature drones in the background.

continued

30 CONTINUED

CONCESSIONS GIRL
Kin I help ya?

TRAVIS rests his elbow on the counter, looking at the GIRL. He is obviously trying to be friendly--no easy task for him. God knows he needs a friend.

TRAVIS
What is your name? My name is Travis.

CONCESSIONS GIRL
Awh, come off it, Pal.

TRAVIS
No, I'm serious, really...

CONCESSIONS GIRL
Ya want me to call da boss? Huh? That what you want?

TRAVIS
No, no, it's all right. I'll have a big Coca-Cola -- without ice -- and a large buttered popcorn, and ...
(pointing)
some of them chocolate covered malted milk balls...and ju-jukes, a box. They last.

CONCESSIONS GIRL
We don't have ju-jukes. We don't have Coca-Cola. We only got Royal Crown Cola.

TRAVIS
That's fine.

CONCESSIONS GIRL
That's a dollar forty-seven.

TRAVIS lays two dollar bills on the counter.

31 INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM

Slight TIMECUT to TRAVIS sitting in theatre, drinking his Royal Crown Cola, eating his popcorn and milk balls. His eyes are fixed on the screen. A MALE VOICE emanates from the screen:

31 CONTD

MALE MOVIE VOICE (O.S.)
Come here, bitch. I'm gonna split you in half.

MOVIE VOICE yields to TRAVIS' monotone narration:

TRAVIS (V.O.)
Twelve hours of work and I still cannot sleep. The days dwindle on forever and do not end.

FADE TO:

WE MEET BETSY

32 EXT. CHARLES PALANTINE CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS

The Headquarters of the "New Yorkers for Charles Palantine for President Committee," located at the corner of 58th Street and Broadway, are festooned in traditional red, white and blue banners, ribbons and signs.

One large sign proclaims "Palantine." Another sign reads "Register for New York Primary, July 20." The smiling middle-aged face of Charles Palantine keeps watch over the bustling pedestrians.

It is LATE AFTERNOON.

33 INSIDE HEADQUARTERS

A variety of young workers joke and chatter as they labor through stacks of papers. The room is pierced with the SOUND of ringing phones.

Seen from a distance -- the only way TRAVIS can see them -- these are America's chosen youth: healthy, energetic, well-groomed, attractive, all recruited from the bucolic fields of Massachusetts and Connecticut.

34 CAMERA FAVORS BETSY, about 25, an extremely attractive woman sitting at the reception desk between two phones and several stacks of papers. Her attractions, however, are more than skin deep. Beneath that Cover Girl facial there is a keen, though highly specialized, sensibility: her eyes scan every man who passes her desk, her mind computes his desirability: political, intellectual, sexual, emotional, material. Simple

34 CONTD

pose and status do not impress her; she seeks out the extraordinary qualities in men. She is, in other words, a star-fucker of the highest order.

Betsy, putting down the phone, calls TOM, a lanky, amiable and modishly long-haired campaign worker over to her desk:

BETSY
Tom.

TOM is pleasant and good-looking, but lacks those special qualities which interest BETSY. He gets nowhere with BETSY -- yet he keeps trying. Just another of those routine office flirtations which pass the hours and free the fantasies.

BETSY
Tom, come here a moment.
(he walks over)
I think this canvas report is about ready to go out. Check it out with Andy, and if he okays it, have a copy made for the campaign headquarters in every county.
(a beat)
And don't forget to add the new photo releases.

TOM
The senator's white paper is almost ready, Bets. Should we wait for that?

BETSY
Andy usually just sends those to the national media. The local press doesn't know what to do with a position paper until UPI and AP tell them anyway.

TOM
I think we should try to get maximum coverage for this new mandatory welfare program. Push the issue.

BETSY
(as if instructing a child)
First push the man, then the issue. Senator Palantine is first of all a dynamic man, an intelligent, interesting, fascinating man.

TOM
You forgot "sexy.",

BETSY
No, I didn't forget "sexy."

TOM
Just didn't get around to it, huh?

BETSY
Oh, Tom, please.

TOM
Well, for Christsakes, you sound like you're selling...I don't know what... cars...not issues.

BETSY
Have you ever why CBS News has the highest ratings?

TOM
More people watch it.

BETSY
Alright, forget it if you're not going to be serious.

TOM
No, c'mon, I'm listening. I was just...

BETSY
Just what?

TOM
Kidding around...you know, fun.

Betsy looks toward the street, then back at Tom.

BETSY
Maybe if you'd try thinking once in a while, you'd get somewhere.

TO
With who?

continued

BETSY
Alright, Now. You want to know why CBS has the highest ratings? You think their news is any different from NBC,ABC? It's all the same news. Same stories. Same order usually. What, you thought they had good news for people, right? You thought that's why people watched CBS? I'll tell you why people watch CBS. Cronkite. The man. You got it? Not the news, not the issues, the man. If Walter Cronkite told people to eat soap, they'd do it. We are selling cars, goddam it.

Betsy's attention is being distracted by something she sees across the street. She puts on her glasses and looks out across the street again.

TOM
Well, if Cronkite's so great, why don't we run him instead?

BETSY
That's the last. The finish. Period.Some people can learn. Some people can't. And you wonder why we never get serious——

TOM
Sure we could run him. You realize he's realize he's already president of his block association?

BETSY
(looks across street again)
Have you been noticing anything strange?

TOM
No, why?

BETSY
Why's that taxidriver across the street been staring at us?

TOM
What taxidriver?

BETSY
That taxidriver. The one that's been sitting there.

TOM
How long has he been there?

BETSY
I don't know--but it feels like a long time.

35- OMIT
36

37 TRAVIS' cold piercing eyes stare out from his cab parked across the street from the Palantine Headquarters. He is like a lone wolf watching the warm campfires of civilization from a distance. A thin reddot glows from his cigarette.

38 TOM exchanges TRAVIS' gaze.

TOM
(determined)
Well, I'll go out and ask him.

As TOM walks toward front door BETSY's eyes alternate between him and the position where TRAVIS sits.

39 EXT. PALANTINE HEADQUARTERS

TOM strides out the front door and walks briskly across the street toward TRAVIS' taxi.

40 TRAVIS spots TOM walking toward him and quickly starts up his cab, then squeals off in a burst of billowing exhaust.

41 TOM watches the speeding taxi quizzically.

42 TRAVIS' taxi continues down Broadway.

CUT TO:

FURTHER THOUGHTS

43 INT. TRAVIS' APARTMENT

He lies on his mattress staring at the ceiling. He is fully clothed and appears deep in thought.

Near his mattress rest several medications: a large bottle of vitamin pills, two smaller bottles of pills, a bottle of peach-flavored brandy.

TRAVIS (V.O.)
All my life needed was a sense of direction, a sense of someplace to go. I do not believe
(MORE)

43 CONTD

TRAVIS (V.O.) (Contd)
one should devote his life to morbid self-attention, but should become a person like other people.

44 ANOTHER DAY - LATE AFTERNOON

TRAVIS' taxi is driving down Broadway with the "Off Duty" sign on.

45 P.O.V. TRACKING SHOT down Broadway. CAMERA stops at PALANTINE CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS. A few WORKERS remain in the office. BETSY's desk is vacant.

46 FIFTH AVENUE - THE SAME AFTERNOON.

CAMERA TRACKS with crowded mass of MANHATTANITES as they ooze through the sidewalks toward their various destinations. Individuals are indiscernible: it is simply a congested mass.

TRAVIS (V.O.) (Contd)
I first saw her at Palantine Campaign Headquarters at 58th and Broadway. She was wearing a yellow dress, answering the phone at her desk.

Suddenly: out of the congested human mass, IN SLOWING MOTION, appears the slender figure of BETSY in a stylish yellow dress. The crowd parts like the Red Sea, and there she is: walking all alone, untouched by the crowd, suspended in space and time.

TRAVIS (V.O.) (Contd)
She appeared like an angel out of this open sewer. Out of this filthy mass. She is alone: they cannot touch her.

47 INT. TRAVIS' APARTMENT

He is at the table, writing in his diary.

48 CLOSE-UP; His stubby pencil rests on the word "her."

CUT TO:

SMALL TALK IN A GREASY SPOON

49 It is 3:30 IN THE MORNING in a bacon-shaped all-night

49 CONTD

WEST SIDE RESTAURANT. The thick smell hangs in the air -- fried grease, smoke, sweat, regurgitated wine.

Whatever doesn't flush away in New York at night turns up in places like this. A burly grease-stained COOK stands over the grill. A JUNKIE shuffles from one side of the door to another. Slouched over the small four-person formica tables are several WELL-DRESSED BLACKS (too well-dressed for this time and place), a cluster of STREET PEOPLE and a lost OLD COOT who hangs onto his cup of coffee as if it were his last possession.

The restaurant, brightly lit, perfectly conveys the image of urban plasticity -- without the slightest hint of an accompanying cleanliness.

50 Toward the rear of the restaurant sit three cabbies: WIZARD, a worn man about fifty, DOUGH-BOY, younger family man, CHARLIE T., fortyish black.

51 Wizard is telling Dough-Boy a story. Charlie T, his elbows propped against the table top, is not listening. He stares silently down at a plate of cold scrambled eggs and a Racing Forum. His eyes may not be open.

WIZARD
First she did her makeup. You know, I hate it when they do that. I mean she does the whole works, the mascara, the eye-shadow, the lipstick, the rouge...

DOUGH-BOY
Not rouge. Blush-On, they call it.

WIZARD
The kind with a brush?

52 TRAVIS appears at the door. He has to push aside the JUNKIE to enter without making physical contact-- something TRAVIS would not relish. He may be repulsed with these people andthis place, but he is too much a part of this to let his feeling rise to the surface.

Wizard gives Travis a perfunctory wave.

WIZARD
Travis.

TRAVIS
Hey Wizard.

53 Travis straddles a seat at the table. Dough-Boy gives Travis something between a wink and an eye-twitch and says:

53 CONTINUED

DOUGH-BOY
Yeah, that's Blush-On. My wife uses it.

WIZARD
(Ironic)
Ask Travis. He's the ladies man.

Travis shrugs and motions for a cup of coffee.

WIZARD
(continuing)
Well, whatever the fuck it is, she used it. And then the spray perfume. You know, the real sweet kind--and, on top of that, get this, right when we're crossing the Tri-boro bridge--she changes her pantyhose!

DOUGH-BOY
No.

Travis turns his head. He appears not to be interested, but is.

WIZARD
Yeah.

DOUGH-BOY
Could you see anything?

WIZARD
Well, she was trying to keep her skirt down, sort of, you know. But it was pretty obvious what she was doing. I mean, Christ, it was rush hour and the traffic's practically standing still.

DOUGH-BOY
What did you do?

WIZARD
Threw on the emergency, jumped the seat and fucked her brains out--What do you think! (They laugh.) What do I have to do? Draw you a picture?

DOUGH-BOY
Yeah.

WIZARD
What was I supposed to do? I was watching in the rear view. You know, just checkin' traffic.

DOUGH-BOY
She catch you looking?

54 A waitress brings Travis's coffee and a glass of water. He asks for a cheeseburger.

WIZARD
Sure. What do you think? She wanted to get out of the cab. I said, "Look, you're in the middle of the fucking bridge. . . "

DOUGH-BOY
You said that? You said "fuckin" to her?

WIZARD
Well, I said, "Lady, please, we're on a bridge...."

DOUGH-BOY
And what happened?

Travis awaits Wizard's answer.

WIZARD
She stayed in the cab, what's she gonna do? But she stiffed me. A real skunk.

DOUGH-BOY
A real skunk.

Wizard realizes Travis and Dough-Boy may not have met.

WIZARD
(paternal)
Travis, you know Dough-Boy, Charlie T?

Charlie T. nods sleepily. Travis indicates he knows Dough-Boy.

DOUGH-BOY
Yeah. We went to Harvard together.
(laughs)

WIZARD
We call him Dough-Boy cause he likes the dollars. He'll chase a buck straight into Jersey.

DOUGH-BOY
Look who's talking?
(gestures around table)
Who else would stay up all night to catch the morning rush hour?

Travis sips his coffee. Charlie T"s eyelids slip shut.

54 continued

WIZARD
(to Travis)
So howsit?

TRAVIS
(w/o inflection)
Some fleet driver for Bell just got cut up. Just heard it on the radio.

DOUGH-BOY
Stick up?

54 /continued

TRAVIS
No, just some crazy fucker. Cut have his ear off.

DOUGH-BOY
Where.

TRAVIS
In the Jungle. 122nd.

TRAVIS' eyes turn toward the restaurant's other patrons.

55 P.O.V.: THREE STREET PEOPLE sitting at a table. One guy, stoned, stares straight ahead. A raggedly attractive girl rests her head on the shoulder of the other, a heavily bearded young man with a headband. They kiss and tease each other, momentarily lost in their separate world.

TRAVIS watches the hippie couple closely, his feeling sharply divided between cultural contempt and morose jealousy. Why should <u>these</u> people enjoy the love and intimacy that has always eluded him? He must enjoy these schizoid emotions, because his eyes dwell on the couple.

DOUGH-BOY(O.S.)
(changing the subject)
You run all over town, don't you, Travis?

WIZARD
(refering to 122nd St.)
Fuckin Mau Mau land, that's what it is.

56 Travis turns back to his companions.

TRAVIS
Huh?

DOUGH-BOY
I mean, you handle some pretty rough traffic, huh?

continued

56 CONTD

TRAVIS
(catching on)
I have.

DOUGH-BOY
You carry a piece?You need one?

TRAVIS
Nah.
(a beat)
I suppose not.

57 OMITTED

58 Waitress slaps down smudge-marked glass of water, and a cheeseburger plate that looks more like a shrunken head on a serving platter.

DOUGH-BOY
Well, you ever need one, I know a feller that kin getcha a real nice deal. Lotsa shit around.

WIZARD
The cops and company raise hell they find out.

TRAVIS drops two Alka-Seltzer into his glass of water.

DOUGH-BOY
Truck drivers bring up Harlem Specials that blow up in your hand. But this guy don't deal no shit. Just quality. If you ever need anything, I can put you in touch.

WIZARD
For a fee.

DOUGH-BOY
For a fee.

WIZARD
I never use mine. But it's a good thing to have . Just as a threat.

DOUGH-BOY
(getting up)
Well, if there's this many hackies inside, there must be lots of fares outside. And I'm gonna go hustle em.

58 CONTINUED

WIZARD
What ya gonna do with all that money, Dough-Boy?

DOUGH-BOY
Support my kids. Can you dig it?
(pause)
Nice to meet ya, Travis. So long, Wizard. Say hello to Malcolm X for me.
(nods to CHARLIE T.)

CHARLIE T. ; remains unmoved: he is sleeping.

DOUGH-BOY exits. TRAVIS smiles perfunctorily, then looks back at WIZARD. They really don't have much to talk about, and the WIZARD doesn't care to manufacture any more conversation.

TRAVIS scans the greasy spoon: the scene is unchanged.

CUT TO:

BETSY MEETS TRAVIS BICKLE

59 EXT. PALANTINE HEADQUARTERS - ANOTHER DAY

Traffic passes.

60 INT. PALANTINE HEADQUARTERS

Tom and Betsy are talking. She takes out a cigarette. He takes out matches to light it.

BETSY
Try holding the match like this.

TOM
This is gotta be a game, right?

BETSY
(putting on glasses)
This I gotta see.

TOM
(burning fingers)
Ouch!

BETSY
(giggling)
Oh, are you all right?

TOM
I'm great. Always set my fingers on fire. Nothing to it. Want to see

continued

60 CONTINUED

TOM
(CONTINUED)
another trick. I do this thing with my nose.

BETSY
No. I just wanted to see if you could light it that way. The guy at the newstand can.

TOM
Ah, yes, the guy at the newstand, Mr. Asbestos. . .

BETSY
He happens to be missing fingers. I first noticed when——

TOM
Is he Italian?

BETSY
No, why?

TOM
You sure he's not Italian?

BETSY
He's black, OK?

TOM
Well, if he had been Italian, they could have been shot off. Sometimes the mob does that to teach guys a lesson. If they blow a job or something.

BETSY
As I said, he isn't Italian, Besides, I thought they just killed them.

TOM
Don't be naive. They can't kill everybody. They have different punishments for different things. Like, if they kill a stool pidgeon, they leave a canary on the body. It's symbolic.

BETSY
Why don't they leave a pidgeon instead of a canary.

TOM
I don't know. Maybe they don't leave a canary. Don't be technical. What I'm saying is if this newstand guy's Italian and his fingers are gone, maybe he's a thief.

60 CONTINUED

BETSY
First, he's not Italian. Second, he's not a thief. I noticed the fingers when he was getting my change-- the right change. Two of his fingers are missing. Just stubs. Like they were blown away. I was putting my change in my purse when I saw him get out a cigarette. I couldn't help watching. I was dying to see how he'd light it.

TOM
With the other hand, right?

BETSY
No, stupid. With the stubs. That's the whole point.

TOM
I know that guy. His hand looks like a paw. An old black guy, the newstand at ---

BETSY
No, this is young--well, I'm never sure how old black people are---but, anyway, he isn't old. That's for sure.

TOM
Show me how he did that again.

61 EXT. ACRROSS THE STREET FROM HEADQUARTERS

TRAVIS is striding briskly across Broadway toward the Palantine Headquarters.

He is dressed the best we have seen him: his pants (not jeans) are pressed, his boots shined, his hair combed. Under his Army jacket he wears a freshly laundered shirt and ivy league tie. He drops his cigarette, steps on it and walks in.
Watching TRAVIS enter Palantine's Headquarters, we are aga surprised to realize that TRAVIS is really quite attracti His deformities are psychological, not physical. He believes he is cursed, and therefore he is.

62 TRAVIS walks briskly into the office, and heads toward BETSY's desk. TOM walks over to greet him, but TRAVIS ignores him.

TRAVIS
(at BETSY's desk)
I want to volunteer.

As the CAMERA examines TRAVIS' face more closely, one can see the hollowness wrought by lack of sleep and sufficient diet.

TOM
(interrupting)
If you'll come this way.

TRAVIS elbows TOM off.

TRAVIS
(to BETSY)
No. I want to volunteer to <u>you</u>.

TOM
(under his voice)
Bets.

BETSY waves TOM off with a short gesture, indicating everything is OK. He walks away.

BETSY
(curious)
And why is that?

TRAVIS is on his best behavior. He smiles slightly:

TRAVIS
Because you are the most beautiful woman I have ever seen.

BETSY is momentarily taken back, but pleased. TRAVIS' presence has a definite sexual charge. He has those star qualities BETSY looks for: she senses there is something special about the young man who stands before her. And then, too, there is that disarming smile. He is, as BETSY would say, "fascinating."

BETSY
(smiling)
Is that so?
(pause)
But what do you think of Charles Palantine?

62 CONTD

TRAVIS
(his mind elsewhere)
Who mam?

BETSY
Charles Palantine. The man you want to volunteer to help elect President.

TRAVIS
Oh, I think he's a wonderful man. Make a great, great President.

BETSY
You want to canvass?

TRAVIS
Yes, mam.

BETSY is interviewing TRAVIS, but she is also teasing him a little, leading him on in a gentle feminine way:

BETSY
How do you feel about Senator Palantine's stand on welfare?

This takes TRAVIS back a bit. He obviously doesn't have the slightest idea what Palantine's stand on welfare is, in fact, he doesn't have any ideas about politics whatsoever. TRAVIS thinks a moment, then improvises an answer:

TRAVIS
Welfare, mam? I think the Senator's right. People should work for a living. I do. Every day. I like to work. Get those old coots off welfare and make 'em work for a change.

BETSY does a subtle double-take: this isn't exactly Palanetine's position on welfare. She remains intrigued by TRAVIS.

BETSY
Well, that's not exactly what the Senator has proposed. You might not want to canvass, but there is plenty of other work we need done: office work, filing, poster hanging.

62 CONTD (2)

TRAVIS
I'm a good worker, Betsy mam, a real good worker.

BETSY
(gesturing)
If you talk to Tom, he'll assign you to something.

TRAVIS
If you don't mind, mam, I'd rather work for you.

BETSY
Well, we're all working tonight.

TRAVIS
Well, Betsy mam, I drive a taxi at night.

BETSY
Well, then, what is it you exactly want to do?

TRAVIS
(bolstering courage)
If you don't mind, mam, I'd be mighty pleased if you'd go out and have some coffee and pie with me.

BETSY doesn't quite know what to make of TRAVIS. She is curious, intrigued, tantalized. Like a moth, she draws closer to the flame:

BETSY
Why?

TRAVIS
Well, Betsy mam, I drive by this place here in my taxi many times a day. And I watch you sitting here at this big long desk with these telephones, and I say to myself, that's a lonely girl. She needs a friend. And I'm gonna be her friend.
(smiles)

TRAVIS rarely smiles, but when he does his whole face glows. It is as if he is able to tap an inner reserve of charm unknown even to himself. BETSY is completely disarmed.

62 CONTD (3)

BETSY
I don't know ...

TRAVIS
It's just to the corner, mam. In broad daytime. Nothing can happen. I'll be there to protect you.

BETSY
(smiles)
All right.
(relents)
All right. I'm taking a break at four o'clock. If you're here then we'll go to the corner and have some coffee and pie.

TRAVIS
Oh, I appreciate that, Betsy mam. I'll be here at four o'clock exactly.
(pause)
And ... ah ... Betsy ...

BETSY
Yes?

TRAVIS
My name is Travis.

BETSY
Thank you, Travis.

TRAVIS nods, turns and exits.

Tom, who has been watching this interchange with a pseudo-standoffish (actually jealous) air, steps over to Betsy. His manner demands some sort of explanation of what Betsy was doing.

Betsy simply shrugs (it's really none of his business) and says:

BETSY
I'm just going to find out what the cabbies are thinking.

CUT TO:

63 COFFEE SHOP RENDEZVOUS

TRAVIS is pacing back and forth on Broadway jsut beyond the Palantine Headquarters. He checks his watch.

TRAVIS (V.O)
April 26, 1972. Four o'clock p.m. I took Betsy to the Mayfair Coffee Shop on Broadway...

64 INT. COFFEE SHOP

TRAVIS and BETSY are sitting in a booth of a small New York Coffee Shop. They both have been served coffee; TRAVIS is nervously turning his cup around in his hands.

continued

64 CONTD

As TRAVIS speaks V.O., WAITRESS brings their orders: apple pie for TRAVIS, fruit compote for BETSY.

TRAVIS (V.O.) (Contd)
I had black coffee and apple pie with a slice of melted yellow cheese. I think that was a good selection. Betsy had coffee and a fruit salad dish. She could have had anything she wanted.

BETSY's conversation interrupts TRAVIS' V.O.:

BETSY
We've signed up 15,000 Palantine volunteers in New York so far. The organizational problems are becoming just staggering.

TRAVIS
I know what you mean. I've got the same problems. I just can't get things organized. Little things, I mean. Like my room, my possessions. I should get one of those signs that says, "One of These Days I'm Gonna Organezizied."

TRAVIS contorts his mouth to match his mispronunciation, then breaks into a big, friendly, infectious grin. The very sight of it makes one's heart pound.

BETSY cannot help but be caught up in TRAVIS' grin. TRAVIS' contagious, quicksilver moods cause her to say:

BETSY
(laughing)
Travis, I never ever met <u>anybody</u> like you before.

TRAVIS
I can believe that.

BETSY
Where <u>do</u> you live?

TRAVIS
(evasive)
Oh, uptown. You know. Some joint. It ain't much.

64 CONTD (2)

BETSY
So why did you decide to drive a taxi at night?

TRAVIS
I had a regular job for a while, days. You know, doin' this, doin' that. But I didn't have anything to do at night. I got kinda lonely, you know, just wanderin' around. So I decided to work nights. It ain't good to be alone, you know.

BETSY
After this job, I'm looking forward to being alone for a while.

TRAVIS
Yeah, well ...
(a beat)
In a cab you get to meet people. You meet lotsa people. It's good for you.

BETSY
What kind of people?

TRAVIS
Just people people, you know. Just people.
(a beat)
Had a dead man once.

BETSY
Really?

TRAVIS
He'd been shot. I didn't know that. He just crawled into the back seat, said "West 45th Street" and conked out.

BETSY
What did you do?

TRAVIS
I shut the meter off, for one thing. I knew I wasn't going to get paid. Then I dropped him off at the cop shop. They took him.

64 CONTINUED

BETSY
That's really someting.

TRAVIS
Oh, you see lots of freaky stuff. in a cab. Especially when the moon's out.

BETSY
The moon?

TRAVIS
The full moon. One night I had three or four wierdos in a row and I looked up and, sure enough, there it was -- the full moon.

Betsy laughs. Travis continues:

TRAVIS
Oh,yeah.People will do anything in front of a taxi-driver. I mean anything. People too cheap to rent a hotel room, people scoring dope, people shooting up, people who want to embarass you.
(a bitterness emerges)
It's like you're not even there, not even a person. Nobody knows you.

Betsy cuts Travis' bitterness short:

BETSY
Com'on, Travis. It's not that bad. I take lots of taxis.

TRAVIS
I know. I could have picked you up.

BETSY
Huh?

TRAVIS
Late one night. About three. At the Plaza.

BETSY
Three in the morning? I don't think so. I have to go to bed early. I work days. It must have been somebody else

TRAVIS
No. It was you. You had some manila folders and a pink bag from Saks..

CONTIUED

Betsy, realizing Travis remembers her precisely, scrambles for a polite rationale for her behavior:

BETSY
You're right! Now I remember! It was after the Western regional planners were in town and the meeting went late. The next day I was completely bushed. It was unbelievable.

TRAVIS
If it wasn't for a drunk I would have picked you up. He wanted to go to the DMZ.

BETSY
The DMZ?

TRAVIS
South Bronx. The worst. I tried to ditch him, but he was already in the cab, so I had to take him. That's the law. Otherwise I would have picked you up.

BETSY
That would have been quite a coincidence.

TRAVIS
You'd be surprised how often you see the same people, get the same fare. Paople have patterns. They do more or less the same things every day. I can tell.

BETSY
Well, I don't go to the Plaza every night.

4 CONTINUED

TRAVIS
I didn't mean you. But just ordinary people. A guy I know - Douzh-Boy- met his wife that way. They got to talking. She said she usually caught the bus so he started picking her up at the bus stop, taking her home with the flag up.

BETSY
That's very romantic. Some of your fares must be interesting. See any stars, politicians, deliver any babies yet?

TRAVIS
(embarassed)
Well, no...not really...had some famous people in the cab...
(remembering)
I got this guy who makes lasers. Not regular lasers, not the big kind. Little lazers, pocket sized, small enough to clip to your belt like a transistor radio, like a gun, you know. ike a ray gun. Zap.

BETSY
(laughs)
What hours do you work?

TRAVIS
I work a single, which means there no replacement -- no second man on the cab. Six to six, sometimes eight. Seventy-two hours a week.

BETSY
(amazed)
You mean you work 72 hours a week?

TRAVIS
Sometimes 76 or 80. Sometimes I squeeze a few more hours in the morning. Eighty miles a day, a hundred miles a night.

BETSY
You must be rich.

TRAVIS
(big affectionate smile)
It keeps ya busy.

BETSY
You know what you remind me of?

TRAVIS
What?

BETSY
That song by Kris Kristoferson, where it

64 CONTINUED

BETSY
(continued)
partly truth, partly
fiction, a walking contradiction."
(smiles)

TRAVIS
(uneasy)
I'm no pusher., Betsy. Honest.
I never have pushed.

continued

64 CONTINUED

BETSY
I didn't mean that, Travis. Just the part about the contradiction.

TRAVIS
(more at ease)
Oh. Who was that again?

BETSY
The singer?

TRAVIS
Yeah. Yes. I don't follow music too much.

BETSY
(slowly)
Kris Kristofferson.

TRAVIS looks at BETSY intently and they exchange smiles.

CUT TO:

INCIDENT IN A RECORD SHOP

65 TRAVIS is walking confusedly around SAM GOODY'S at MIDDAY, obviously unable to locate what he desires.

TRAVIS is lost among the hip, young intellectual types that populate the store. He watches the stylish, attractive female help, unable to come right out and request what he desires.

A young SALESGIRL sees his plight, walks over and asks if he needs any help. TRAVIS INAUDIBLY says a name to her, although the name is obviously Kristoferson's.

The SALESGIRL digs out Kristoferson's "Silver-Tongued Devil" album for him.

TRAVIS says something additional to the SALESGIRL and she goes off to gift wrap the album.

66 TRAVIS emerges from the EX. RECORD STORE, the brightly gift-wrapped album proudly tucked under his arm.

CUT TO:

A NIGHT BEHIND THE WHEEL

67 A lengthy P.O.V. SHOT from TRAVIS' vantage point behind the wheel.

We see the city as TRAVIS sees it. The front windshield is a little dirty, the lighted meter juts up at the lower

67 CONTD

right screen. The intercom crackles with STATIC and MESSAGES.

The lights turns green; we take off with a start. A short first gear -- quick shift -- a long second gear. The cab eases to the right of the street, checking out prospective fares.

Our eyes scan the long line of PEDESTRIANS. The regulars -- bums, junkies, tourists, hookers, homosexuals, hippies -- they mean nothing now. They only blend into the sidewalks and lighted storefronts..

Our eyes now concentrate on those that step away from the curb -- is that man hailing a cab or scratching his head?

In the next block there are perhaps three, four fares -- quick gas-up through this yellow light -- brake sharply -- check the action. The first: tourists, nickel tippers -- let the next guy pick them up. Let the second go also, the third -- there's a live fare. Middle-aged LOCAL WOMAN: short fare to the East Side, good tip.

We pull to the curb, waiting for her to get in. It is a long wait -- a black STREET WALKER crosses in front of the cab. We focus on (as TRAVIS would) a YOUNG COUPLE embracing in the distance.

As we Travel, we hear Travis' random thoughts about selecting fares and tips:

TRAVIS V.O.
You work at night, you get an instinct. You can smell them. The big tippers. the stiffs, the trouble makers. Quarter is good tip for Manhattan. Queens is better, Brooklyn the best. Go for the guy with suitcases. The rich are the worst tippers, Hooks are lousy. Spooks are Okay, but they don't live on Park Ave after all.

68 The meter is activated: .60 registers. Tick, tick, tick. A quick glance shows the WOMAN is now seated. She says softly, "192 East 89." We take off with another jolt. Cross back up 9th Ave., then cut through the park.

69 We're zooming up 9th Ave. -- how many green lights can we string together? Somebody steps out to hail the cab, but quickly steps back again. The meter is up to $.90. It'll be a $1.40 fare.

70 Now through the park and we're almost there. Check the numbers -- 134 -- 140. End of the block. Fare=$1.40.

71 Check back mirror -- she's getting out two bills. Two quarters and a dime change. Tip'll be either .25 or .35.

72 The tip comes back: 35¢ -- good tip. Good lady. We take off again with a jolt.

This is TRAVIS' world: dark side streets, garish glaring main streets, quick glances, quicker evaluations -- a dozen instantaneous decisions a minute.. Are these people, are these objects?

73 EXT. TRAVIS' TAXI speed down darkened street.

74. TRAVIS lets off a fare and pulls into line at the Plaza.

TRAVIS (V.O.)
I called Betsy again at her office, and she said maybe we could go to a movie together after she gets off work tomorrow. That's my day off. At first she hesitated, but I called her again and she agreed.
(pause)
Betsy. Betsy what? I forgot to ask her last name again. Damn. I've got to remember stuff like that.

75. TRAVIS' thoughts are with BETSY, as THREE MEN enter Travis' cab. He activates the meter and pulls off.

MAN'S VOICE
St. Regis Hotel.

76 TRAVIS checks the mirror. Scanning across the back seat, he recognizes the middle passenger. It is CHARLES PALANTINE, candidate for President. He must have left the Hotel shortly after BETSY.

Tom, seated on the jump seat, checks his watch and speaks deferentially to Palantine:

TOM
It's 12:30 now. You'll have fifteen minutes before the actual luncheon begins.

Palantine nods as his assistant picks up the thread of an earlier conversation.

76 CONTINUED

PALANTINE ASSISTANT
I don't think we have to worry about anybody here committing themselves until things start coming in from California.

TRAVIS recognizes his passenger. He puts out his cigarette.

TRAVIS
(interrupting)
Say, aren't you Charles Palantine, the candidate?

PALANTINE
(only mildly irritated)
Yes I am.

TRAVIS
Well, I'm one of your biggest supporters. I tell everybody that comes in this cab that they should vote for you.

PALANTINE
(pleased; glances to check TRAVIS' license)
Why, thank you Travis.

TRAVIS
I'm sure you'll win, sir. Everybody I know is going to vote for you. (a beat)
I was going to put one of your stickers on my taxi but the company said it was against their policy.

PALANTINE (pleasant)
I'll tell you, Travis, I've learned more about this country sitting in taxi-cabs than in the board room of General Motors.

TOM
(joking)
And in some other places too...

Palantine, his assistant and Tom all laugh. Palantine, quickly reassuming his candiorial mien, speaks to Travis:

PALANTINE
Travis, what single thing would <u>you</u> want the next President of this country to do most?

continued

6 CONTINUED

TRAVIS
I don't know, sir. I don't follow politicial issues much.

PALANTINE
There must be something.....

TRAVIS
(thinks)
Well, he should clean up this city here. It's full of filth and scum. scum, and filth. It's like an open sewer. Sometimes I can hardly take it. Some days I go out and smell it then I get headaches that just stay and never go away. We need a President that would clean up this whole mess. Flush it out.

76 CONTD (2)

PALANTINE is not a Hubert Humphrey-type professional bull-shitter, and TRAVIS' intense reply stops him dead in his tracks. He is forced to fall back on a stock answer but he tries to give it some meaning.

PALANTINE
(after a pause)
I know what you mean, Travis, and it's not going to be easy. We're going to have to make some radical changes.

TRAVIS
(turning the wheel)
Damn straight.

77 EXT. BARCLAY HOTEL

TRAVIS' taxi pulls up in front of the Barclay Hotel.

PALANTINE and AIDE get out of the cab. SECOND AIDE stays in back seat a moment to pay TRAVIS.

PALANTINE looks in front window of cab momentarily and nods goodbye to TRAVIS.

PALANTINE
Nice talking to you, Travis.

TRAVIS
(calling back)
Thank you, sir. You're a good man, sir.

TRAVIS' taxi departs.

78 PALANTINE and AIDES walk up carpet to the St. Regis.

CAMERA CLOSES IN on PALANTINE as he stops, turns back and watches TRAVIS' departing taxi.

PALANTINE turns back and ascends the hotel steps with his AIDES.

CUT TO:

DATE NIGHT

79 EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - EARLY EVENING

TRAVIS, dressed to the teeth, walks brightly down the

81 CONTD

TRAVIS
I don't follow music much. I'd like to though.
(second thought)
Honest.

BETSY
(pointing to album)
So you haven't heard this record yet?

TRAVIS
No.
(sly smile)
I thought maybe you could play it for me on your player.

BETSY's face backtracks a bit. Maybe she was wrong to go out with this fellow she doesn't know.

She makes a polite laugh.

82 LATER. TRAVIS and BETSY are in TIMES SQUARE, turning the corner from Broadway to 42nd Street. TRAVIS carries the album under his arm.

They approach the garish marquee of a large midtown porno theater advertising "The Swedish Marriage Manual." The box office is flanked on both sides by glass cages filled with explicit publicity stills. Offending portions have been blocked out with black tape.

TRAVIS steps over to the window and buys two $5 tickets. BETSY, befuddled, watches him. She doesn't know what to say. TRAVIS returns with the tickets.

BETSY still has not fully comprehended what is happening:

BETSY
What are you doing?

TRAVIS
(innocent)
I bought a couple of tickets.

BETSY
But this is a porno movie.

TRAVIS
No, these are the kind that couples go to. They're not like the other
(MORE)

82 CONTD

TRAVIS (Contd)
movies. All kinds of couples go. Honest. I've seen them.

TRAVIS seems confused. He is so much a part of his own world, he fails to comprehend another's world. Compared to the movies he sees, this is respectable. But then there's also something that TRAVIS could not even acknowledge, much less admit: that he really wants to get this pure white girl into that dark porno theater.

TRAVIS makes an awkward gesture to escort BETSY into the theater. BETSY looks at the tickets, at the theater, at TRAVIS. She mentally shakes her head and walks toward the turnstile. She thinks to herself: "What the hell. What can happen?" She's always been curious about these pictures anyway, and -- like all women, no matter how intelligent -- she's been raised not to offend her date. A perverse logic which applies even more in offsetting circumstances like these.

82A INSIDE THE THEATER

TRAVIS escorts BETSY to an empty center row. TRAVIS was right. Couples do go to films like this. There are at least six or seven other MEN with their bewigged "DATES."

TRAVIS settles into his familiar porno theater slouch. BETSY looks curiously from side to side.

82B ON SCREEN, a conservatively-dressed middle-aged woman is speaking in Swedish about the importance of a healthy sex life in a happy marriage. Subtitles translate her words. Then, without warning, there is a direct CUT to a couple copulating on a sterile table-like bed.

82C TRAVIS watches intently. The color, however, is slowly draining from BETSY's cheeks. One thought fills her mind: "What am I doing here?"

TRAVIS
(to himself)
Damn.

BETSY
What's wrong?

TRAVIS
I forgot to get the Coca-Cola.

82C CONTINUED

That does it. BETSY just looks at him for a moment, then gets up and starts to leave. TRAVIS, confused, hustles after her.

He follows her out of the theatre.

83 ON THE SIDEWALK

TRAVIS catches up with her.

TRAVIS
Where are you going?

BETSY
I'm leaving.

TRAVIS
What do you mean?

BETSY looks at TRAVIS, trying to understand him:

BETSY
These are not the kind of movies I go to.

TRAVIS
Well, I don't follow movies too much....

BETSY
You mean these are the only kind of movies you go to?

The TICKET GIRL watches expressionlessly from the booth.

TRAVIS
This is sort of high class.....

BETSY
I mean porno movies.

TRAVIS
(hesitant)
Well...mostly...

BETSY
My God!

TRAVIS
We can go to another movie if you like, I don't care. I got money. There's plenty.....

3 CONTINUED

TRAVIS gestures toward the long row of 42nd Street marquees, but is interrupted by BETSY:

BETSY
If you just wanted to fuck, why didn't you just come right out and say it?

TRAVIS is flabbergasted by BETSY'S blunt language. His arm still gestures toward the marquees, his lips continue to move, but words do not come out.

Unable to respond to BETSY'S question, TRAVIS picks up where he left off:

TRAVIS
...there's plenty of movies around here. I haven't seen any of them, but I'm sure they've good.

BETSY
No, Travis. You're a sweet guy and all that, but I think this is it. I'm going home.

TRAVIS
(interrupting)
You mean you don't want to go to a movie?
(a beat)
There's plenty of movies around here.

BETSY
No, I don'y feel so good. We're just two very different kinds of people, that's all.

TRAVIS
(puzzled)
Huh?

BETSY
It's very simple. You go your way, I'll go mine. Thanks anyway, Travis.

TRAVIS
But... Betsy.....

BETSY
I'm getting a taxi.
She walks to the curb.

TRAVIS
(following her)

83 CONTINUED

BETSY
Keep it.

TRAVIS
Can I call you?

Betsy looks for a cab.

TRAVIS
(tender)
Please, Betsy, I bought it for you.

Betsy looks at his sad, sweet face and relents a bit.

BETSY
All right, I'll accept the record.

BETSY accepts the record, but quickly turns and hails a taxi.

BETSY
Taxi!

83A A taxi quickly pulls up.

TRAVIS feebly protests to no one in particular:

TRAVIS
But I got a taxi.

BETSY gives instructions to CAB DRIVER, looks briefly back at TRAVIS, then straight ahead. Taxi speeds off.

TRAVIS looks around helplessly: a cluster of PEDESTRIANS on the crowded street has stopped to watch the argument. TRAVIS looks back at the WOMAN in the porno theatre box office who has also been following the argument.

CUT TO:

PHONE CALLS AND FLOWERS

84 INSIDE TRAVIS' APARTMENT

TRAVIS is writing at the table. There are some new items on the table: his giant econo-size bottle of vitamins, a giant econo-size bottle of aspirins, a pint of apricot brandy, a partial loaf of cheap white bread.

84 CONTINUED

On the wall behind the table hang two more items: a gag sign reading "One of These Days I'm Gonna Get Organezizied" and a orange-and-black bumper sticker for Charles Palantine.

TRAVIS (V.O.)
May 8, 1972. My life has taken another turn again. The days move along with regularity....

85 C.U. of notebook: TRAVIS is no longer sitting at desk. The pencil rests on the open notebook.

86 LATER THAT DAY: TRAVIS has pulled his straight-backed chair around and is watching his small portable TV, which rests on the upright melon crate.

A cereal bowl partially filled with milk rests in his lap. TRAVIS pours a ccouple shots of the apricot brandy into the bowl, dips folded chunks of white bread into the mixture, and eats them.

87 TRAVIS is watching early evening NEWS PROGRAM. TV b.g. SOUND. CHARLES PALANTINE is being interviewed somewhere on the campaign trail.

TRAVIS (V.O.) (Contd)
...one day indistinguishable from the next, a long continuous chain, then suddenly --there is a change.

87A BETSY is walking down a midtown street when Travis suddenly appears before her. He has been waiting.

TRAVIS tries to make conversation but she doesn't listen. She motions for him to go away and keeps on walking.

TRAVIS, protesting, follows.

CUT TO:

88 INT. BUILDING DAY

TRAVIS speeks intensely into a wall pay phone.

TRAVIS (V.O.)
I tried to call her several times.

We HEAR Travis' voice on the phone:

TRAVIS
(smoking a cigarette)
You feeling better? You said you didn't feel so good.....

TRAVIS V.O.
But after the first call, she would no longer come to the phone.

TRAVIS holds the receiver in his hand. The other party has hung up.

89 TRACKING SHOT across interior lower wall of TRAVIS' APARTMENT. Ag-inst the stark wall there is a row of wilted and dying floral arrangements. Each one of the four or five bouquets is progressively more wilted than the one closer to the door. They have been returned.

89 CONTINUED

TRAVIS (V.O.)(CONTD)
I also sent flowers with no luck. I should not dwell on such things, but set them behind me. The smell of the flowers only made me sicker. The headaches got worse. I think I've got stomach cancer. I should not complain so. "You're only as healthy as you feel."

90 A drama is acted out at PALANTINE HEADQUARTERS: TRAVIS, groggy and red-eyed from lack of sleep, walks into the campaign headquarters about NOONTIME.

CONTINUED

90 CONTD

BETSY is standing near the rear of the office; she ducks from sight when she sees TRAVIS enter. TRAVIS' path is cut short by TOM's large-framed body. There is no live sound.

TRAVIS (V.O.) (Contd)
I realize now how much she is like the others, so cold and distant. Many people are like that. Women for sure. They're like a union.

TRAVIS tries to push his way past TOM but TOM grabs him. TRAVIS says something sharply to TOM and the two scuffle. TOM, by far the taller and stronger, quickly overcomes TRAVIS, wrenching his arm behind his back.

TRAVIS kicks and protests as TOM leads him to the front door.

91 ON THE SIDEWALK

TRAVIS' efforts quickly subside when TOM motions to a nearby POLICEMAN. TRAVIS quiets down and walks off.

CUT TO:

THE PUSSY AND THE .44

92 EXT.

TRAVIS is again making his way through the garish urban night. He stops for a PASSENGER on PARK AVE. A middle-aging professorial executive.

93 C.U. TRAVIS: his face is expressionless. The MAN makes himself comfortable in the back seat.

PROFESSORIAL PASSENGER
Jackson Heights.

TRAVIS has no intention of driving out to Jackson Heights and coming back with a fare.

TRAVIS
I'm off duty.

PROFESSORIAL PASSENGER
You mean you don't want to go out to Jackson Heights?

93 CONTD

TRAVIS
No, I'm off duty.

PROFESSORIAL PASSENGER
Then how come your "Off Duty" light wasn't on.

TRAVIS switches on the "Off Duty" light.

TRAVIS
It was on.
(gesturing toward top of taxi)
It just takes a while to warm up. Like a TV.

TRAVIS doesn't budge. PROFESSORIAL PASSENGER curses to himself and exits cab. TRAVIS takes off.

94 P.O.V. as TRAVIS' eyes dwell on the young HIP COUPLES coming out of a East Side movie house.

95 LATER THAT NIGHT, TRAVIS pulls over for a young (mid-twenties) MAN wearing a leather sports jacket.

TRAVIS eyes his passenger in rear-view mirror.

YOUNG PASSENGER
417 Central Park West.

96 EXT.

TRAVIS' taxi speeds off.

97 LATER, TRAVIS' taxi slows down as it approaches 400 block of Central Park West.

TRAVIS checks apartment numbers.

YOUNG PASSENGER
Just pull over to the curb a moment.

TRAVIS turns the wheel.

YOUNG PASSENGER
Yeah, that's fine. Just sit here.

TRAVIS waits impassively. The meter TICKS away.

After a long pause, the PASSENGER speaks:

97 CONTD

YOUNG PASSENGER
Cabbie, ya see that light up there on the seventh floor, three windows from this side of the building?

98 CAMERA CLOSES IN on 417 Central Park West: TRACKING UP to the seventh floor, it moves three windows to the right.

TRAVIS (O.S.)
Yeah.

A young WOMAN wearing a slip crosses in front of the light.

YOUNG PASSENGER (O.S.)
Ya see that woman there.

TRAVIS (O.S.)
Yeah.

YOUNG PASSENGER (O.S.)
That's my wife.
(a beat)
But it ain't my apartment.
(a beat)
A nigger lives there.
(a beat)
She left me two weeks ago. It took me this long to find out where she went.
(a beat)
I'm gonna kill her.

99 C.U. TRAVIS' face: it is devoid of expression.

YOUNG PASSENGER
What do you think of that, cabbie?

100 C.U. YOUNG PASSENGER's face: it is gaunt, drained of blood, full of fear and anger.

TRAVIS does not respond.

YOUNG PASSENGER
Huh?
(a beat)
What do you think of that, huh?

TRAVIS shrugs, gesturing toward meter.

100 CONTD

YOUNG PASSENGER
I'm gonna kill her with a .44 Magnum pistol.

101 CAMERA returns to SEVENTH FLOOR WINDOW. WOMAN is standing in the light.

YOUNG PASSENGER (O.S.)
Did you ever see what a .44 can do to a woman's face, cabbie?
(pause)
Did you ever see what it can do to a woman's pussy, cabbie?

TRAVIS says nothing.

YOUNG PASSENGER (O.S.)
I'm going to put it right up to her, cabbie. Right in her, cabbie. You must think I'm real sick, huh? A real pervert. Sitting here and talking about a woman's pussy and a .44, huh?

102 CAMERA CLOSES IN on TRAVIS' face: he is watching the WOMAN in the seventh floor window with complete and total absorption. It's the same glazed-over stare we saw in his eyes as he watched the porno movie.

FADE TO:

THE TRAVELING SALESMAN

103 BROOKLYN STREET CORNER - DAY

TRAVIS stands near the corner wearing his boots, jeans, western shirt and army jacket.

He pulls his aspirin bottle out of his pocket, shakes three or four into his palm, pops them into his mouth and chews.

An "Off Duty" taxi pulls up to the curb. TRAVIS gets in.

104 INSIDE TAXI

DOUGH-BOY leans back from the wheel and greets TRAVIS as he enters.

DOUGH-BOY
Hey Travis. This here's Easy Andy. He's a traveling salesman.

104 CONTD

In the back seat, beside TRAVIS, sits ANDY, an attractive young man about 29. He wears a pin-striped suit, white shirt and floral tie. His hair is modishly long.

ANDY
Hello Travis.

TRAVIS nods as the taxi speeds off.

105 DOUGH-BOY slows down near an economy hotel. Not a flop house, but not so fancy they care what the guests do in the privacy of their rooms.

ANDY
This is fine Dough-Boy.
(to TRAVIS)
Pay Dough-Boy here.

TRAVIS pulls a twenty out of his pocket and gives it to DOUGH-BOY.

TRAVIS
20 bucks?

DOUGH-BOY
(takes bill)
Yeah. Hey thanks. That's real nice, Travis.

106 TRAVIS and ANDY get out of the cab and walk toward the hotel. DOUGH-BOY pulls away.

As they enter the hotel, they pass a JUNKIE, stoned out and spread-eagled across the hood of a derelict old blue Dodge.

106A INT. HOTEL

TRAVIS follows ANDY up the worn carpeted stairs and down the hallway. ANDY unlocks the door to one of the rooms.

107 The HOTEL ROOM is barren and clean; there's no sign anyone is staying in it. The fire escape is appropriately near.

ANDY locks the door behind them, steps over to the closet, unlocks it and pulls out two grey Samsonite suitcases -- the kind you can drive a truck over.

107 CONTD

ANDY
Dough-Boy probably told you I don't carry any Saturday Night Specials or crap like that. It's all out of State, clean, brand new, top-of-the-line stuff.

ANDY places the suitcases on the white bedspread. The suitcases are equipped with special locks, which he quickly opens.

ANDY opens the suitcases: stacked in grey packing foam are rows and rows of brand new hand guns.

TRAVIS
You got a .44 Magnum?

ANDY
That's an expensive gun.

TRAVIS
I got money.

ANDY unzips a cowhide leather pouch to reveal a .44 Magnum pistol. He holds it gingerly, as if it were a precious treasure. ANDY opens the chambers and cradles the long eight-inch barrel in his palm. The .44 is a huge, oversize inhuman gun.

ANDY
(admiringly)
It's a monster. Can stop a car -- put a bullet right into the block. A premium high resale gun. $350 -- that's only a hundred over list.

EASY ANDY is a later version of the fast-talking, good-looking kid in college who was always making money on one scheme or another. In high school he sold lottery tickets, in college he scored dope, and now he's hustling hand guns.

ANDY holds the Magnum out for TRAVIS' inspection. There's a worshipful CLOSE-UP of the .44 Magnum. It is a monster.

TRAVIS hefts the huge gun. It seems out of place in his hand. It is built on Michelangelo's scale. The Magnum belongs in the hand of a marble god, not a slight taxi-driver. TRAVIS hands the gun back to ANDY.

107 CONTD (2)

ANDY
I could sell this gun in Harlem for $500 today -- but I just deal high quality goods to high quality people.
(pause)
Now this may be a little big for practical use, in which case I'd recommend the .38 Smith and Wesson Special. Fine solid gun -- nickel plated. Snub-nosed, otherwise the same as the service revolver. Now that'll stop anything that moves and it's handy, flexible. The Magnum, you know, that's only if you want to splatter it against the wall. The movies have driven up the price of the Magnum anyway. Everybody wants them now. But the Wesson .38 -- only $250 -- and worth every dime of it.
(he hefts .38)
Throw in a holster for $10.

TRAVIS hefts the nickel-plated .38, points it out the window.

ANDY (Contd)
Some of these guns are like toys, but a Smith and Wesson, man, you can hit somebody over the head with it and it will still come back dead on. Nothing beats quality.
(pause)
You interested in an automatic?

TRAVIS
I want a .32. Revolver. And a palm gun. That .22 there.

ANDY
That's the Colt .25 -- a fine little gun. Don't do a lotta damage, but it's as fast as the Devil. Handy little gun, you can carry it almost anywhere. I'll throw it in for another $125.

TRAVIS holds the .32 revolver, hefts it, slips it under his belt and pulls his shirt over it. He turns from side to side, to see how it rides in his waist.

107 CONTD (3)

TRAVIS
How much for everything.

ANDY
The .32's $150 -- and you're really getting a good deal now -- and all together it comes to, eh, seven eighty-five for four pieces and a holster. Hell, I'll give you the holster, we'll make it seven seventy-five and you've got a deal -- a good one.

TRAVIS
How much to get a permit to carry?

ANDY
Well, you're talking big money now. I'd say at least five grand, maybe more, and it would take a while to check it out. The way things are going now $5,000 is probably low. You see, I try not to fool with the small-time crap. Too risky, too little bread. Say 6 G's, but if I get the permit it'll be as solid as the Empire State Building.

TRAVIS
Nah, this'll be fine.

ANDY
You can't carry in a cab even with a permit -- so why bother?

TRAVIS
Is there a firing range around?

ANDY
Sure, here, take this card. Go to this place and give 'em the card. They'll charge you, but there's won't be any hassle.

TRAVIS pulls out a roll of crisp one hundred dollar bills and counts off eight.

ANDY
You in Nam? Can't help but notice your jacket?

107 CONTD (4)

TRAVIS
(looking up)
Huh?

ANDY
Vietnam? I saw it on your jacket. Where were you? Bet you got to handle a lot of weapons out there.

TRAVIS hands ANDY the bills. ANDY counts them and gives TRAVIS a twenty and a five.

TRAVIS
Yeah. I was all around. One hospital, then the next.

ANDY
(through counting)
It's hell out there all right. A real shit-eatin war. I'll say this, though: it's bringing back a lot of fantastic guns. The market's flooded. Colt automatics are all over.
(pockets the money)

TRAVIS
(intensely)
They'd never get me to go back. They'd have to shoot me first.

(pause)
You got anything to carry these in?
(gestures to pistols)

TRAVIS is like a light switch: for long periods he goes along dark and silent, saying nothing; then suddenly, the current is turned on and the air is filled with the electricity of his personality. TRAVIS' inner intensity sets ANDY back a bit, but he quickly recovers.

ANDY
Sure.

ANDY pulls a gym bag from under the bed. He wraps the gun in the sheet in the bag and zips it up. An identical gym bag can be partially seen under the bed. He hands TRAVIS the bag.

107 CONTD (5)

ANDY
You like ball games?

TRAVIS
Huh?

ANDY
I can get you front and center. What do like? I can get you Mets, Yankees, Knicks, Rangers? Hell, I can get you the Mayor's box.

TRAVIS
Nah. I ain't interested.

ANDY closes and locks the suitcases.

ANDY
Okay, okay.

TRAVIS turns to leave.

ANDY (Contd)
Wait a second, Travis. I'll walk you out.

CUT TO:

TRAVIS GETS ORGANIZED

108 SEVERAL WEEKS LATER. The face of TRAVIS' apartment has changed. The long, blank wall behind the table is now covered with tacked-up charts, pictures, newspaper clippings, maps. CAMERA does not come close enough to discern the exact contents of these clippings.

109 TRAVIS is in C.U. in the middle of the floor doing push-ups. He is bareback, wearing only his jeans. There is a long scar across his left side.

TRAVIS (V.O.)
May 29, 1972. I must get in shape. Too much sitting has ruined my body. Twenty-five push-ups each morning, one hundred sit-ups, one hundred knee-bends. I have quit smoking.

110 TRAVIS, still bareback, passes his stiff arm through the flame of a gas burner without flinching a muscle.

110 CONTD

TRAVIS (V.O.) (Contd)
Total organization is necessary.
Every muscle must be tight.

111 INT. FIRING RANGE

The CRACKING SOUND of rapid-fire pistol shots fills the musty air of the firing range. The walls are heavily soundproofed, and sawdust is spread over the floor.

TRAVIS stands rock solid, firing the .44 Magnum at an arm's length. With each blasting discharge from the Magnum, TRAVIS' body shudders and shakes, his arm rippling back. TRAVIS quickly bolts himself upright, as if each recoil from the giant gun was a direct attack on his masculinity.

TRAVIS fires the Magnum as quickly as he can re-set, re-aim and re-fire. The Magnum empty, he sets it down, picks up the .38 Special and begins firing as soon as he can aim. After the .38, comes the .25: it is as if he were in a contest to see how quickly he can fire the pistols. After all the guns are discharged, he begins reloading them without a moment's hesitation.

Downrange, the red and white targets have the black outline of a human figure drawn over them. The contour-man convulses under the steady barrage of TRAVIS' rapid-fire shots.

112 INT. APARTMENT

TRAVIS, now wearing an unfastened green plaid western shirt, sits at the table writing in his diary. The vial of bennies rests on the table.

TRAVIS (V.O.)
My body fights me always. It
won't work, it won't sleep,
it won't shit, it won't eat.

113 LATER. TRAVIS, his shirt still open revealing his bare chest, sits on his straight-backed chair watching the TV. The .44 Magnum rests on his lap.

114 The TV is broadcasting ROCK TIME, a late afternoon local teenage dance and rock show. On screen YOUNG TEENYBOPPERS are dancing, and the TV CAMERAMAN, as any devotee of the genre knows, is relentlessly ZOOMING-IN ON their firm young breasts, fannies and crotches -- a sensibility which reflects TRAVIS' own. These supper-hour rock dance shows are the most unabashedly

114 CONTD

voyeuristic form of broadcasting the medium has yet developed.

115A The HARD ROCK NUMBER ends, and the TV CAMERA CUTS TO the local DISC JOCKEY, a hirsute plastic-looking man about 35. FIVE scrumptious TEENYBOPPERS are literally hanging on his shoulders and arms, their faces turned up to him in droolish awe. Out of his mouth comes an incessant stream of disc jockey blather. He is the complete asshole; I don't know who is currently performing this function in New York, but in Los Angeles his name is Real Don Steele.

TV DISC JOCKEY
Freshingly, fantastic, freaked-out dance time. Can you dig it? Dig on it. You got it, flaunt it.

115 TRAVIS watches the show, his face hard and unmoving. He is, as the Scriptures would say, pondering all these things in his heart. Why is it the assholes get all the beautiful young chicks? He takes a swig of peach brandy.

CUT TO:

THE $20 RIDE

116 EARLY EVENING, about 6:30 p.m. TRAVIS' taxi, with "Off Duty" light on, sits near the curb somewhere in midtown Manhattan.

TRAVIS runs his hand down the left side of his jacket, attempting to smooth out the bulge underneath.

TRAVIS opens his jacket partially, checking underneath. There rests the nickel-plated .38 Special in its holster.

117 P.O.V. down the street where TRAVIS' taxi is parked: several blocks ahead the red, white and blue campaign headquarters of CHARLES PALANTINE are visible.

TRAVIS' eyes resume their watch.

118 TRAVIS starts the cab and drives toward the PALANTINE HEADQUARTERS.

119 TRACKING P. V. shot of row of storefronts leading up to Palantine Headquarters. P.O.V. passes headquarters: it is half-empty. A few stalwart SUPPORTERS continue to work toward the rear of the office. BETSY's desk is vacant.

120 Sign in window reads: "Only /47/ More Days Until Arrival of CHARLES PALANTINE."

121 TRAVIS' "Off Duty" light goes off as he speeds up and heads toward a prospective fare.

122 LATER THAT NIGHT, about 9:30. UPTOWN -- 128th and Amsterdam. The Jungle TRAVIS' taxi pulls up to an address, lets off YOUNG BLACK MAN.

TRAVIS receives fare and tip, takes off.

123 P.O.V. as TRAVIS works his way through Harlem back down Seventh Ave. Cluster of YOUNG BLACK STREET PUNKS pretend to hail cab -- we ignore them. One throws wine bottle which crashes in our path -- taxi swerves to avoid it.

124 CAMERA TRACKS through sidewalk CROWDS with the roving, suspicious, antagonistic eye of a taxi-driver.

125 LATER THAT NIGHT, about 12:30. TRAVIS is on the LOWER EAST SIDE, somewhere on B Street, east of Tompkins Square.

126 The sidewalks are populated with the remains of what once was the hippie movement: TEENAGE STREET-WALKERS, JUNKIES, THUGS, emaciated LONERS on the prowl.

127 TRAVIS' taxi pulls over, letting out a fare.

TRAVIS pockets his fare, but the rear right door doesn't slam -- instead there is the SOUND of another person jumping into the cab.

TRAVIS checks the back seat in the rear-view mirror: there sits a pale HIPPIE PROSTITUTE.

The GIRL is, at best, 14 or 15, although she has been made up to look older. She wears floppy, Janis Joplin clothes. Her face is pallid. She wears large blue-tinted sunglasses and multi-colored leg stockings. Her name, as we shall learn later, is IRIS.

TRAVIS hesitates, looking at her in the mirror.

IRIS
Come on, mister, let's get outta here -- quick.

TRAVIS moves to activate the meter, when the rear door opens.

IRIS is helped out of the cab by a MAN TRAVIS cannot see.

127 CONTD

SPORT
(to IRIS)
Come on, baby, let's go. This is all a real drag.

IRIS lets herself be taken out of the cab. The rear door closes.

Sport leans partially in the front window, throwing something on the front seat. TRAVIS looks: it is a crumpled $20 bill.

SPORT
Just forget all about this, cabbie. It's nothing.

TRAVIS cannot see the Sport's face lime green completely, but notices he is wearing a jacket. The voice is that of a man in his early twenties.

TRAVIS turns to catch a glimpse of Sport as he walks off with Iris.

TRAVIS shrugs and turns around.

TRAVIS' taxi pulls away.

CUT TO:

FOREPLAY TO GUNPLAY

128 EARLY MORNING, 6:00 a.m. Quitting time -- TRAVIS pulls into TAXI GARAGE.

129 INT. GARAGE

TRAVIS pulls into his stall.

TRAVIS sits in driver's seat, thinking a moment. He looks to his right: the crumpled $20 bill still lies there, untouched since it was thrown there six hours previously.

TRAVIS reluctantly picks up the $20 bill and stuffs it into his jacket pocket as he gets out of the cab. He gathers up his time report and heads toward book-in table.

130 A SHORT WHILE LATER, TRAVIS is walking down the sidewalk near the taxi garage. His hands are in his jacket pockets, obscuring the slight bulge on his left side.

131 TRAVIS turns into the box office of PORNO THEATER. He reaches into jacket pocket for money to purchase ticket and pulls out crumpled $20 bill. Seeing the $20 bill, he decides not to use it, and pays for ticket out of his wallet instead.

132 TRAVIS walks past concession stand en route to the darkened theater auditorium. A YOUNG MAN is now sitting listlessly behind the concessions counter.

133 INT. PORNO THEATER AUDITORIUM

TRAVIS slouches down into his seat, his face glowing in the reflected light from the screen.

FEMALE MOVIE VOICE (O.S.)
Oh, come on, now, down, lick it, come on ...
(a beat)
Mmm, that's good. Ahh, ahh, more ...

TRAVIS averts his eyes as the action on screen becomes too graphic. Placing his stiffened right hand beside his eyes, TRAVIS can, by turning it inward, shut off or open up his field of vision by small degrees.

MOVIE VOICE DIMINISHES, replaced by SOUND of TRAVIS' voice over.

TRAVIS (V.O.)
The idea had been growing in my brain ...

CUT TO:

134 TRACKING SHOT to wall of TRAVIS' APARTMENT. CAMERA MOVES slowly across wall covered with clippings, notes, maps, pictures. We now see their contents clearly:

The wall is covered with CHARLES PALANTINE political paraphernalia; there are pictures of him, newspaper articles, leaflets, bumper stickers. As the CAMERA MOVES along it discovers a sketch of Plaza Hotel, Kennedy Airport and cut-up sections of city maps with notations written in. There is lengthy N. Y. Times clipping detailing the increased Secret Security Protection during the primaries. A section pertaining to PALANTINE is underlined. Further along there is a sheet reading "traveling schedule" and a calendar for June with finely written notations written over the dates.

134 CONTD

TRAVIS (V.O.) (Contd)
... for some time. True Force.
All the king's men cannot put
it back together again.

As the CAMERA reaches the end of its track, it finds TRAVIS, standing, his shirt open, by the mattress. He is wearing the empty holster, and the .44 is in his hand.

In the SHOTS that follow TRAVIS gives the audience a lesson in gunmanship:

135 TRAVIS practices fast-drawing the .38 Special from his holster and firing it.

136 He hooks the .44 into his pants behind his back and practices withdrawing it. He holds the .44 firmly at an arm's length, tightening his forearm muscles.

137 He has worked out a system of metal gliders taped to his inner forearm, whereby the Colt .25 can rest hidden behind the upper forearm until a spring near the elbow is activated, sending the .25 flying down the gliders into his palm. He has cut open his shirt to accomodate the gun mechanism and now checks in the mirror to see how well the gun is hidden.

138 He straps an Army combat knife to his calf and cuts a slit in his jeans where the knife can be pulled out quickly.

139 He now tries on various combinations of shirts, sweater and jacket in front of the mirror to see how well he can hide all the handguns he wishes to carry. Finally, wearing two western shirts, a sweater and jacket, he manages to obscure the location of all three guns, although he resembles a hunter bundled up against the Arctic winter.

140 He sits at the table dum-dumming the .44 bullets -- cutting "x's" across the bullet heads.

141 P.O.V.: he scans the objects of his room through the scope of the .38.

142 TRAVIS stands in the middle of his apartment, staring at his PALANTINE wall. His eyes are glazed with introspection; he sees nothing but himself.

TRAVIS (V.O.) (Contd)
Listen you screwheads:
Here is a man ...

143 TRAVIS lies on his mattress, all bundled up in his shirts, sweater, jacket and guns. His face is turned toward the ceiling, but his eyes are closed. Although the room is flooded with light, he is finally catching some sleep. The big furry animal drifts into his own world.

TRAVIS (V.O.) (Contd)
... who wouldn't take it any more, a man who stood up against the scum, the cunts, the dogs, the filth. Here is ...
(voice trails off)

144 C.U. of diary: entry ends with words "Here is" followed by erratic series of dots.

CUT TO:

INCIDENT IN A DELI

145 NIGHT: the taxis are roaming the slick streets.

146A Sometimes after 2:00 a.m., TRAVIS pulls his cab to the curb near an all-night delicatessen in Spanish Harlem. The streets are relatively deserted.

146 TRAVIS waves to STOREKEEPER as he walks past counter:

TRAVIS
Hey 'Melio.

Spanish rhythm and blues blares from a cheap radio.

TRAVIS walks over to dairy counter in rear of store, picks out a pint of chocolate milk, goes over to the open cooler and picks through various chilled pre-packaged sandwiches. He overhears a VOICE as he looks at the sandwiches.

When TRAVIS returns to the counter with the chocolate milk and a sandwich in one hand, he sees a YOUNG BLACK MAN holding a gun on 'Melio. The STICK-UP MAN is nervous, hopped-up, or both: he bounces on the balls of his cheap worn black tennis shoes -- a strung-out junkie on a desperation ride. The STICK-UP MAN, a thorough unprofessional, doesn't notice TRAVIS.

'MELIO watches the STICK-UP MAN closely, deciding what to do himself.

STICK-UP MAN
(shaking gun)
Come on, man. Quick, quick, quick -- let's see that bread.

146 CONTD

It doesn't take TRAVIS long to decide what to do: without hesitation he pulls his .32 from his jacket pocket.

TRAVIS
Hey dude!

The STICK-UP MAN, surprised, turns toward TRAVIS, finding only an exploding .32. The MAN's lower jaw bursts open with blood as he reels and crashes to the floor. There is no emotion on TRAVIS' face.

As the STICK-UP MAN falls, 'MELIO leans over the counter, wielding his battered .38. He is about to fire when he realizes the MAN is already dead.

'MELIO, charged up, turns his gun toward TRAVIS, then, realizing the danger is over, lowers it again.

'MELIO
Thanks, man. Figured I'd get him on the way out.

TRAVIS sets his .32 on the counter.

TRAVIS
You're gonna have to cover me on this one, 'Melio. I can't stay for the cop show.

'MELIO
You can't do that, Travis. You're my witness.

TRAVIS
The hell I can't. It's no sweat for you. What is this for you, number five?

'MELIO smiles and holds up four fingers:

'MELIO
No, only four.
(shrugs)
Alright, Travis, I'll do what I can.

TRAVIS
Thanks a lot.

TRAVIS exits. 'MELIO picks up the phone and starts dialing. The bloody BODY lies on the floor unmoving.

146 CONTD (2)

TRAVIS, still carrying his pint of chocolate milk and sandwich, walks down the empty sidewalk and enters his cab. The street is deserted.

CUT TO:

MIDAFTERNOON MELODRAMA

147 DIRECT CUT TO PORNOGRAPHIC MOVIE: this is the first time we have actually seen the porno movie itself. SEVERAL ACTORS and ACTRESSES are dallying on screen in whatever manner the ratings board deems permissible.

Whatever the action, the movie's decor is strictly Zody's -- ersatz landscape paintings, tufted bedspreads. As in most porno films, the ACTORS look up occasionally toward the CAMERA to receive instructions. Studio grunts, groans and moans of pleasure have been dubbed in.

Action on screen begins to go into SLOW MOTION, the ACTORS and ACTRESSES gradually transforming obscenity into poetry.

CUT TO:

148 TRAVIS, sitting in his chair in his APARTMENT, watching afternoon soap opera. He is cleaning his .38 and eating from a jar of applesauce. Soap opera audio continues.

He watches the soap opera without expression.

SOUND TRACK of film also SLOWS DOWN, gradually mixing with and then becoming the sound track of a midafternoon TV soap opera.

149 A YOUNG GIRL and BOY are talking in those familiar soap opera voices about a third party, the GIRL's mother, who had tried to terminate their "relationship."

CUT TO:

150 TELEVISION: The BOY is visiting the GIRL in her hospital room. Both look as if they've stepped out of the Blue Chip Stamp catalogue.

SOAP OPERA BOY
Is it that she just doesn't -- like me?

150 CONTD

SOAP OPERA GIRL
(hesitantly)
Well Jim, it's just that -- I don't know how to say this -- it's that she thinks your parents aren't ... good enough, I guess.

151 TRAVIS, through cleaning his gun, begins to play a game with the television set.

He places the heel of his boot at the top of the melon crate which supports the TV. Then, slowly rocking his heel back and forth, he sees how far he can tip the melon crate without knocking it over.

The TV, still broadcasting the hospital room melodrama, rocks back and forth.

TRAVIS pushes the TV farther and farther until finally the inevitable happens -- the crate tips backward, sending the portable TV crashing to the floor.

There is a short flash and the TV screen turns white.

TRAVIS, realizing what he has done, bends over, turns the TV upright on the floor, fiddles with the knobs, slaps it, and tries to reactivate the vanished image. TRAVIS' efforts are futile; a tube has broken, and the TV will not come back to life.

TRAVIS
(to himself)
Damn, damn.

TRAVIS bends over in the chair and places his head in his hands, despairing of himself.

FADE TO:

THE WIZARD SPEAKS

152 About 1 a.m. TRAVIS pulls his cab behind a line of empty taxis parked outside the Bellmore Cafeteria, a cabbie hangout on Park Avenue South.

He locks his cab and walks past the line of taxis. He sidesteps TWO DRUNKEN FIGHTING BUMS and enters the Bellmore.

153 A LOUD BUZZER RINGS as TRAVIS steps INTO THE BELLMORE. He pulls a ticket from the dispenser (silencing the buzzer) and walks toward the wall-length counter.

153 CONTD

An assortment of CABBIES are seated around a formica-topped table near the rear of the cafeteria. Some are barely awake, some are eating, the rest are swapping stories and smalltalk.

Wizard,Dough-Boy, Charlie T and a FOURTH CABBIE are seated at a long table.

WIZARD
You know Eddie, he's the new hippie kid in our group, long hair....

Wizard demonstrates length of hair and others nod.

WIZARD
...he called up the Dispatcher last night. Charlie McCall, our dispatcher....

DOUGH-BOY
One-Ball Mc Call?

WIZARD
That's the guy. Eddie calls him up and says, "Hey, what do you want me to do. I'm over here at Poly Prep. I got a girl in the back and she doesn't have the fare. She wants me to come in back and collect. What should I do?

The cabbies laugh. Across the cafeteris Travis selects a cup of coffee and some pastries.

CHARLIE T
This is on the two-way with about a hundred and fifty cats listenin in.

WIZARD
McCall says. "How much on the meter? Eddie comes back and says "Two-fifty." McCall says, "Is she worth it".

More laughter.

DOUGH-BOY
Fuckin One-Ball.

WIZARD
And the kid says. "Yeah. She's about 19, good-lookin".

WIZARD
McCall says, " What can I tell you?

FOURTH CABBIE
Should have told him to get an OK from

DOUGH-BOY
Remember the time this cat picks up four dudes from the other side, Pakastanis I think they were, holds up their passports. to the toll booth collector on the bridge and charges em ten bucks each for 'crossing the border?

They all laugh.

CHARLIE T
Hell, I know'd you to do worse.

DOUGH-BOY
Least I'm no airport rat. I work the whole town.

CHARLIE T
(chucking)
It's a living.

WIZARD gets up to leave.

WIZARD
Well, I'm shovin' on.

WIZARD gets up, nods and walks toward the CASHIER. After a second's thought, TRAVIS calls to him:

TRAVIS
Hey Wiz, just a second. I wanna talk to you.

WIZARD waits for TRAVIS as he takes a final gulp of coffee and catches up with him. CHARLIE T calls to TRAVIS as they go:

CHARLIE T
See ya, Killer. Don't forget your pea shooter.

CHARLIE T cocks his imaginary gun again, fires and chuckles.

WIZARD and TRAVIS nod goodbye, pay the CASHIER and exit.

EXT.

TRAVIS follows WIZARD out onto the sidewalk. TRAVIS follows WIZARD as he walks toward his cab. He has something on his mind, something he wants to talk to WIZARD about.

TRAVIS
(walking)
Hey Wiz.

WIZARD
Yeah?

155 CONTD

TRAVIS
Real down.

WIZARD
It happens.

TRAVIS
Sometimes it gets so I just don't know what I'm gonna do. I get some real crazy ideas, you know? Just go out and do somethin.

WIZARD
The taxi life, you mean.

TRAVIS
Yeah.

WIZARD
(nods)
I know.

TRAVIS
Like do anything, you know.

WIZARD
Travis, look, I dig it. Let me explain. You choose a certain way of life. You live it. It becomes what you are. I've been a hack 27 years, the last ten at night. Still don't own my own cab. I guess that's the way I want it. You see, that must be what I am.

155A A police car stops across the street. TWO PATROLMEN get out and roust the JUNKIE from his doorway.

155B WIZARD
(continuing)
Look, a person does a certain thing and that's all there is to it. It becomes what he is. Why fight it? What do you know? How long you been a hack, a couple months? You're like a peg and you get dropped into a slot and you got to squirm and wiggle around a while until you fit in.

155B CONTD

TRAVIS
(pause)
That's just about the dumbest thing I ever heard, Wizard.

WIZARD
What do you expect, Bertrand Russell? I've been a cabbie all my life, what do I know?
(a beat)
I don't even know what you're talking about.

TRAVIS
Neither do I, I guess.

WIZARD
You fit in. It's lonely, it's rough at first. But you fit in. You got no choice.

TRAVIS
Yeah. Sorry, Wizard.

WIZARD
Don't worry, Killer. You'll be all right.
(a beat)
I seen enough to know.

TRAVIS
Thanks.

WIZARD gives TRAVIS a short wave implying, "Chin up, old boy," and walks around to the driver's side of his cab.

WIZARD drives off, leaving the street to its natural inhabitants.

CUT TO:

A NEW FACE IN THE CROWD

FADE IN:

156 EXT. CHARLES PALANTINE RALLY - DAY

A rally platform in a supermarket parking lot somewhere in QUEENS is draped in red, white and blue bunting.

A CROWD of about 500 persons mills about, waiting for the rally to begin. Piped pop-country MUSIC plays

156 CONTD

over the loudspeaker system.

The CADRE OF SECRET SERVICE MEN, with their distinctive metallic grey suits, sun glasses and football physiques, stands out in the CROWD.

On the PLATFORM are seated an assortment of LOCAL POLITICOS as well as some PALANTINE WORKERS and ADVISERS.

TOM is silently reading something on the podium, and BETSY stands on the platform steps talking with ANOTHER WORKER.

TOM looks up and to his left for a moment, then returns to what he was reading. Then he returns his gaze to the upper left, watching something very closely.

After a moment he walks over to the steps where BETSY is standing.

TOM
Betsy, come over here a moment.

BETSY
What is it? I'm busy.

TOM
(insistent)
Just follow me.

BETSY excuses herself and walks across the platform with TOM. As they stand to the rear of the platform, TOM secretively makes a gesture with his eyes and says out of the side of his mouth:

TOM
Look there. (her eyes follow his) No, over further - get your glasses - yes, over there. Isn't that little guy the same guy that was bugging you around the office about a month ago?

BETSY, putting on her glasses, looks closely. She tries not to make her stare too obvious.

BETSY
No, I don't think so.
(a beat)
That's someone else.

156 CONTD

TOM
Now look more closely. Look around the eyes and chin. See? See there?

157 CAMERA CLOSES IN on TRAVIS BICKLE standing in the CROWD: he has shaved his head to a short stubble. There he is: brush-cut, wearing a giant grin, and a large "Palantine '72" button.

Although it is a pleasant sunny day, TRAVIS wears a bulky bulged-out Army jacket.

TRAVIS looks warily from side to side and vanishes in the CROWD.

158 A SHORT WHILE LATER, TRAVIS walks up to a SECRET SERVICE MAN standing near the fringes of the CROWD. The SECRET SERVICE MAN -- in sun glasses, grey suit, ever-roving eyes -- is immediately identifiable.

Whenever TRAVIS confronts a symbol of authority, he becomes like a young boy. This time is no exception, although one suspects there is a plan hatching beneath that boyish exterior. The SECRET SERVICE MAN, for his part, is about as talkative as the Sphinx.

TRAVIS
Are you a Secret Service Man?

SECRET SERVICE MAN
(indifferently)
Why do you ask?

TRAVIS
I've seen a lot of suspicious-looking people around here today.

SECRET SERVICE MAN glances at TRAVIS momentarily.

SECRET SERVICE MAN
Who?

TRAVIS
Oh, lots. I don't know where they all are now. There used to be one standing over there.
(points)

SECRET SERVICE MAN's gaze follows TRAVIS' finger for a second, then returns to TRAVIS.

158 CONTD

TRAVIS (Contd)
Is it hard to get to be a Secret Service Man?

SECRET SERVICE MAN
Why?

TRAVIS
I kinda thought I might make a good one. I'm very observant.

SECRET SERVICE MAN
Oh?

TRAVIS
I was in the Army too.
(beat)
And I'm good with crowds.

The SECRET SERVICE MAN is starting to get interested in TRAVIS: he definitely ranks as a suspicious character.

SECRET SERVICE MAN
Is that so?

TRAVIS
What kind of guns do you guys use? .38's?

The SECRET SERVICE MAN decides it's time to get some more information on TRAVIS:

SECRET SERVICE MAN
Look, um, if you give me your name and address, we'll send you the information on how to apply.

TRAVIS
You would, huh?

SECRET SERVICE MAN
(taking out notepad)
Sure.

TRAVIS
My name is Henry Krinkle -- that's with a "K." K-R-I-N-K-L-E. I live at 13 1/2 Hopper Avenue, Fair Lawn, New Jersey. Zip code 07410.
(a beat)
Got that?

158 CONTD (2)

SECRET SERVICE MAN
Sure, Henry. I got it all. We'll send you all the stuff all right.

TRAVIS
Great, hey. Thanks a lot.

The SECRET SERVICE MAN motions to a SECRET SERVICE PHOTOGRAPHER to catch a picture of TRAVIS. TRAVIS notices this, and quickly slips away into the CROWD.

CUT TO:

159 TRAVIS sits at his desk in his APARTMENT, writing. He wears jeans, western shirt and empty holster.

TRAVIS (V.O.)
June 11. Eight rallies in six more days. The time is coming.

CUT TO:

A REMEMBERED FACE

160 NIGHT. TRAVIS' taxi picks up a FARE in the midtown area and heads downtown.

161 LOWER EAST SIDE. TRAVIS lets off FARE on B Street and cuts across toward Tompkins Square.

162 TRAVIS turns the corner when SKREETCH! he suddenly hits the brakes, causing the cab to rock back and forth.

He has almost hit a YOUNG GIRL recklessly crossing the street. She thumps her hand on the taxi hood to regain her balance and stares in shock through the front window. C.U. GIRL's face.

TRAVIS recognizes her face: it's IRIS, the GIRL in his taxi a week or so before. IRIS looks at TRAVIS sharply then turns and continues walking.

TRAVIS' eyes follow her and she rejoins a GIRLFRIEND. They are both dressed as hippie hookers: sloppy clothes, boots, jeans, floppy hats. And the old come-hither walk is unmistakable.

TRAVIS follows IRIS and her GIRLFRIEND slowly as they walk down the sidewalk.

163 TRAVIS' P.O.V.: He examines them from bottom to top --

163 CONTD

boots, legs, thighs, breasts, faces, hats.

As TRAVIS rolls astride the GIRLS, he notices the familiar FRINGE OF A SUEDE JACKET standing in the shadows. The GIRLS look toward the SHADOWED FIGURE, smile, acknowledge some unheard comment, and continue on.

IRIS looks back uneasily at TRAVIS' taxi and continues on.

164 On the corner stand TWO well-to-do COLLEGE STUDENTS, somewhat out of place in this environment, but making every attempt to groove on it. They are high on something or another.

The GIRLS spot the COLLEGE STUDENTS and walk over to them. They exchange some small talk and walk off together. There is little subtlety involved: it is obviously a pick-up.

165 TRAVIS must negotiate a turn around the corner if he is to continue following the GIRLS and their COLLEGIATE JOHNS. This is not so easy, since the traffic is heavy.

As TRAVIS slows down to make the turn, he notices ANOTHER HIPPIE HOOKER who had been watching him watching IRIS and her GIRLFRIEND. She walks over to the taxi, leans in the open left front window and gives TRAVIS the come-on disguised as an innocent question:

166 C.U. HIPPIE HOOKER.

HIPPIE HOOKER
Hey cabbie! You comin' or goin'?

167 TRAVIS quickly turns his face away from her in a combination of shock, embarrassment and revulsion. He is the child caught with his hand in the cookie jar. The very presence of this crassly, openly sexual human being frightens and sickens him.

168 TRAVIS takes off with a skreetch. His taxi shoots down the block.

CUT TO

CAMPAIGN PROMISES

169 A HOT JUNE DAY. TRAVIS' taxi, the "Off Duty" sign on,

169 CONTD

is parked against the curb somewhere in HARLEM. WHITE COPS, SECRET SERVICE MEN and REPORTERS, punctuate the otherwise BLACK CROWDS which walk to and fro in the b.g.

CHARLES PALANTINE's voice can be heard coming from a distant loudspeaker system, It is a political rally.

170 TRAVIS sits behind the wheel, coldly staring at something in the distance. His hair, of course, is still clipped short and he wears mirror-reflecting sunglasses. Even though a drop of sweat is working its way down his cheek, TRAVIS wears his Army jacket with the bulge on the left side -- the .38 Smith and Wesson bulge.

171 A BLOCK AWAY, PALANTINE stands on a platform outside his uptown campaign headquarters. On the platform sit an array of BLACK DIGNITARIES. Nearby we recognize the SECRET SERVICE MAN TRAVIS spoke to at the earlier rally: he scans the CROWD anxiously.

PALANTINE is speaking animatedly. He is an excellent speaker and captures our attention. He drives hard toward his arguments, crashes down on his points. His strained voice rings with sincerity and anger.

172 C.U. of PALANTINE as he speaks. He is dressed in rolled-up shirtsleeves and sweat pours down his face.

CHARLES PALANTINE
The time has come to put an end to the things that divide us: racism, poverty, war -- and to those persons who seek to divide us. Never have I seen such a group of high officials from the President to Senate leaders to Cabinet members ...

CUT TO TRAVIS: no expression. PALANTINE's words are barely distinguishable from a block away:

PALANTINE
(in distance)
... pit black against white, young against old, sow anger, disunity and suspicion -- and all in the name of the "good of the country." Well, their game is over.
(applause)
(MORE)

172 CONTD

PALANTINE (Contd)
All their games are over. Now is the time to stand up against such foolishness, propaganda and demagoguery. Now is the time for one man to stand up and accept his neighbor, for one man to give in order that all might receive. Is unity and love of common good such a lost thing?

173 ALL LIVE SOUND CEASES as TRAVIS' narration begins. He is reading from a letter or card he has just written.

174 As he speaks we see SHOTS of PALANTINE speaking, a seated row of YOUNG BLACK PALANTINE red, white and blue bedecked CHEERLEADERS, SECRET SERVICE AGENTS examining the CROWD and so forth. These SHOTS have no direct relationship to the narration.

TRAVIS (V.O.)
(reading)
Dear Father and Mother,

June is the month, I remember, which brings not only your wedding anniversary, but also Father's Day and Mother's birthday. I'm sorry I can't remember the exact dates, but I hope this card will take care of all of them.

I'm sorry I again can not send you my address like I promised to last year, but the sensitive nature of my work for the Army demands utmost secrecy. I know you will understand.

I am healthy and well and making lots of money. I have been going with a girl for several months and I know you would be proud if you could see her. Her name is Betsy, but I can tell you no more than that.
(interrupted)

175 As TRAVIS reads third paragraph, a POLICEMAN is seen walking from behind TRAVIS' taxi to his window.

The POLICEMAN's voice comes during a pause in the

175 CONTD

narration. LIVE SOUND RESUMES.

POLICEMAN
(standing near window)
Hey, cabbie, you can't park here.

TRAVIS
(penitent)
Sorry, officer.

POLICEMAN
You waiting for a fare?

POLICEMAN leans his head in window, inspecting the cab. As he does, TRAVIS slides his right hand into the left side of his jacket, ready to draw his revolver.

TRAVIS
No, officer.

POLICEMAN
All right, move it.

176 TRAVIS starts up his taxi and drives off.

LIVE SOUND again CEASES as TRAVIS resumes reading letter as taxi drives away.

177 As TRAVIS reads final paragraph, scene CUTS TO INT. APARTMENT where TRAVIS sits at his table.

TRAVIS (V.O.)
(resuming reading)
I hope this card finds you all well, as it does me. I hope no one has died. Don't worry about me. One day there will be a knock on the door and it will be me.

Love, Travis.

TRAVIS, at his desk, examines the card upon which he has just written this letter.

178 C.U. cover of card. It is a 25¢ Wedding Anniversary card with a four-color embossed cover. The design could only be described as ur-kitsch. A cartoon Mr. and Mrs. All-America stand before an outdoor barbecuing grill, clicking salt and pepper shakers in a toast. Sentiment reads:

178 CONTD

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY
To a Couple
Who Have Found
the Perfect Combination
For Marriage ...

The card opens to read:

LOVE!

Underneath the word "Love!" begins TRAVIS' short message to his parents, a message which extends to the back cover of the card.

CUT TO:

SWEET IRIS

179 NIGHT on the LOWER EAST SIDE. TRAVIS sits parked in the dark shadows of a side street. The lone wolf waits.

180 TRAVIS watches the SLUM GODDESSES as they work the section of the street reserved for hippie hookers.

181 TRAVIS' P.O.V.: some of the YOUNG STREET GIRLS are arrogant, almost aggressive, others are more insecure and inexperienced.

181A A BLACK MAN charges down the sidewalk across the street from TRAVIS. He walks at a fast, maniacal clip, looking only at the sidewalk in front of him. Out of his mouth comes a continuous stream of invective: "That-cock-sucking-crazy-no-good-asshole-bitch-when-I-get-my-fucking-fingers-on-her-nigger-tits-I'm-gonna-ring-em-and-shit-up-her ass ... " and so on. He is Out Of Control. Nobody seems to notice or care.

182 TRAVIS takes a swig of peach brandy and continues his stake-out.

183 Finally, TRAVIS spies the object of his search: IRIS walks down the sidewalk with her GIRLFRIEND. Iris wears her large blue sunglasses.

184 TRAVIS checks to see if his .38 is in place (it is), opens the door and exits from the cab.

Flipping up the collar of his Army jacket, TRAVIS slouches over and walks toward IRIS. He sort of sidles up next to her and walks beside her: TRAVIS always looks most suspicious when he's trying to appear innocent.

184 CONTINUED

TRAVIS
(shy)
Hello.

IRIS
You looking for some action?

TRAVIS
Well...I guess so.

IRIS
(eying him)
All right.
(a beat)
You see that guy over there?
(nods)
His name is Sport. Go talk to him. I'll wait here.

Travis' eyes follow Iris' nod until they reach Sport, standing in a doorway in his lime green jacket. Travis walks toward him.

Sport, a thirtiesh white greaser, has the affectations of a black pimp. His hips are jiving, his fingers softly snapping. He sings to him self, "Going to the chapel, gonna get married...." His complexion is sallow; his eyes cold and venal. He could only seem romantic to a confused underaged runaway.

TRAVIS
You name Sport?

Sport immediately takes Travis for an undercover cop. He extends his crossed wrists as if to be handcuffed.

SPORT
Here, officer, take me in. I'm clean. I didn't do it. Got a ticket once in Jersy. that's all. Honest, officer.

TRAVIS
Your name Sport?

SPORT
Anything you say, officer.

TRAVIS
I'm no cop. (looks back at Iris). I want some action.

SPORT
I saw. $20 fifteen minutes. $30 half hour.

TRAVIS
Shit.

SPORT
Take it or leave it.

TRAVIS

185 CONTD

TRAVIS digs in his pocket for money.

SPORT
No, not me. There'll be an elderly gent to take the bread.

TRAVIS turns to walk away.

SPORT
Catch you later, Copper.

TRAVIS freezes, not saying anything. He turns back toward SPORT.

TRAVIS
I'm no cop.

SPORT
Well, if you are, it's entrapment already.

TRAVIS
I'm hip.

SPORT
Funny, you don't look hip.
(laughs)

TRAVIS walks back to IRIS.

IRIS motions for TRAVIS to follow her and he does.

IRIS and TRAVIS turn the corner and walk about a block, saying nothing. IRIS turns into a darkened doorway and TRAVIS follows her.

186 At the top of the dark stairs IRIS and TRAVIS enter a dimly lit hallway. On either side are doors with apartment numbers. IRIS turns toward the first door, No. 2.

IRIS
This is my room.

At the far end of the darkened corridor sits a huge OLD MAN. His face is obscured by shadow. TRAVIS is about to enter the room when the OLD MAN speaks up:

OLD MAN
Hey cowboy!

TRAVIS turns his head toward the OLD MAN who has stood up and is advancing toward him.

186 CONTINUED

OLD MAN
(motioning to TRAVIS' jacket)
The rod.
(a beat)
Gimme the rod, cowboy.

TRAVIS hesitates a moment. uncertain what to do. The OLD MAN reaches in TRAVIS' jacket and pulls out the .38 Special.

OLD MAN
This ain't Dodge City, cowboy.
You don't need no piece.
(glances at watch)
I'm keepin' time.

TRAVIS enter No. 2 with IRIS.

187 TRAVIS looks around IRIS' room: although dimly lit, the room is brightly decorated. There is an orange shag carpet, deep brown walls and an old red velvet sofa. On the walls are posters of Mick Jagger, Bod Dylan and Peter Fonda. A Neil Young album is playing on a small phonograph.

This is where IRIS lives: it bears the individual touch of a young girl.

IRIS lights a cigarette, takes a single puff and places it in an ashtray on the bedstand.

TRAVIS
Why you hang around with them greasers?

IRIS
A girl needs protection.

TRAVIS
Yeah. From the likes of them.

IRIS
(shrugs)
It's your time mister. Fifteen minutes ain't long.
(gestures to cigarette)
That cigarette burns out, your time is up.

IRIS sits on the edge of the bed and removes her hat and coat. She takes off her blue-tinted sunglasses--her last defense. Without the paraphernalia of adulthood, Iris looks like a little girl she is. About 14, 15

TRAVIS
What's your name?

187 CONTD

IRIS
Easy.

TRAVIS
That ain't much of a name.

IRIS
It's easy to remember.

TRAVIS
What's your real name?

IRIS
I don't like my real name.

TRAVIS
(insistent)
What's your real name?

IRIS
Iris.

TRAVIS
That's a nice name.

IRIS
That's what you think.

187A Over shoulder (using DOUBLE for IRIS) Camera on DOUBLE'S back as she unbuttons her shirt. TRAVIS is unnerved by her partial nudity.

TRAVIS
Don't you remember me?
Button your shirt.

187B IRIS buttons the bottom button of her shirt.

IRIS
(examining him)
Why? Who are you?

TRAVIS
I drive a taxi. You tried to get away one night. Remember?

IRIS
No.

TRAVIS
You tried to run away in my taxi but your friend -- Sport -- wouldn't let you.

187B CONT (2)

IRIS
I don't remember.

TRAVIS
It don't matter. I'm gonna get you outa here.
(looks toward door)

187C Close Up (C.U.) of IRIS

IRIS
We better make it, or Sport'll get mad. How do you want to make it?

187D Over shoulder on TRAVIS [Using DOUBLE for IRIS]

TRAVIS
(pressured)
I don't want to make it. I came here to get you out.

IRIS
You want to make it like this [Voice over using DOUBLE. DOUBLE goes for his fly.]

TRAVIS pushes DOUBLE'S hand away.

187E He sits beside her on the edge of the bed.

TRAVIS
(taking her by the shoulders)
Can't you listen to me? Don't you want to get out of here?

IRIS
Why should I want to get out of here? This is where I live.

TRAVIS
(exasperated)
But you're the one that wanted to get away. You're the one that came into my cab.

IRIS
I musta been stoned.

TRAVIS
Do they drug you?

IRIS
(reproving)
Oh. come off it, man.

187F [Using DOUBLE for IRIS, DOUBLE tries to unzip TRAVIS'

187F CONTD (2)

This only unnerves TRAVIS more: sexual contact is something he's never really confronted.

TRAVIS
Listen...

IRIS
[Voice over using DOUBLE]
Don't you want to make it?
(beat)
Can't you make it?

TRAVIS
(distraught)
I want to help you.

TRAVIS is getting increasingly panicked, but IRIS only thinks this is part of his particular thing and tries to overcome it.

187G C.U. IRIS

IRIS
(catching on)
You' can't make it, can you?
(a beat)
I can help you.

TRAVIS stands several feet from IRIS. His fly is still open, and the white of his underwear shows through his jeans. He is starting to come apart.

187H C.U. TRAVIS

TRAVIS
Fuck it! Fuck it! Fuck it!
Fuck it! Fuck it! Fuck it!
Fuck it! Don't you understand anything?

IRIS says nothing. She no longer tries to make him.

There is a moment of silence. TRAVIS moves

187I C.U. IRIS

IRIS
You don't have to make it, mister.

187J CONTD

TRAVIS rests a moment, collecting himself. Finally, he says:

TRAVIS
(slowly)
Do you understand why I came here?

IRIS
I think so. I tried to get into your cab one night, and now you want to come and take me away.

TRAVIS
Don't you want to go?

IRIS
I can leave anytime I want.

TRAVIS
But that one night?

IRIS
I was stoned. That's why they stopped me. When I'm not stoned, I got no place else to go. They just protect me from myself.

There is a pause. TRAVIS smiles and shrugs apologetically. TRAVIS looks at Iris' cigarette. It's burning down to the butt.

TRAVIS
Well, I tried.

IRIS
(compassionate)
I understand, mister. It means something, really.

TRAVIS
(getting up)
Can I see you again?

IRIS
That's not hard to do.

TRAVIS
No, I mean really. This is nothing for a person to do.

187J CONTD (2)

IRIS
Sure. All right. We'll have breakfast. I get up about one o'clock. Tomorrow.

TRAVIS
(thinking)
Well tomorrow noon there's a ... I got a ...

IRIS is interfering with TRAVIS' assassination schedule.

IRIS
Well, you want to or not?

TRAVIS
(deciding)
O.K. It's a date. I'll see you here, then.

TRAVIS turns; IRIS smiles.

TRAVIS
Oh, Iris?

IRIS
Yes?

TRAVIS
My name's Travis.

IRIS
Thank you, Travis.

TRAVIS
So long, Iris.
(a beat)
Sweet Iris.
(smiles)

TRAVIS exits.

188 TRAVIS closes the door to No. 2 and stands in the corridor for a moment.

The OLD MAN slowly walks from the dark end of the hallway with TRAVIS' .38 in his hand. OLD MAN stands near TRAVIS, and checks his watch.

OLD MAN
(holding gun)
I think this is yours, cowboy.

188 CONTD

TRAVIS reaches in his jacket pocket and pulls out the familiar crumpled $20 bill. He makes a big show of stuffing the wrinkled bill into the OLD MAN's hand. The OLD MAN doesn't understand the significance of it.

TRAVIS
(restrained anger)
Here's the twenty bucks, old man. You better damn well spend it right.

TRAVIS turns and walks away.

OLD MAN says as TRAVIS walks down stairs:

OLD MAN
Come back anytime you want, cowboy. But without the rod — please.

TRAVIS does not respond.

CUT TO:

188A INT. ST. REGIS SUITE NOON

Palantine, Tom and Palantine's Assistant are seated in garishly decorated suite.

ASSISTANT
Well, at least it wasn't chicken.

PALANTINE
It wasn't? I thought it was. It tasted like chicken.

TOM
C'mon, Senator. That was a class dinner. The St. Regis is a class joint. That was veal.

PALANTINE
Was it? It sure tasted like chichen to me. (a beat) Lately, everything tastes like chichen to me.

CONTINUED

ASSISTANT
Everything? Got to watch your gut.

PALENTINE
What about it? I took 20 off before we started this thing.

ASSISTANT
Ape you've put ten of it back on.

PALANTINE
Ten? I don't think so. You really think so? Ten?

TOM
Those TV cameras do. I caught the rally on CBS. You looked a little paunchy.

PALANTINE
I don't think I gained ten pounds.

Palantine gets up and walks over to the window. Its bars form a cross-sight on his head. He thinks to himself:

PALANTINE
(weary)
Jesus Christ.

He looks at the crowded traffic on Fifth Avenue eighteen floors below. It is a mass of yellow

CUT TO:

188B EXT. FIFTH AVE NOON

Travis' cab pulls away from the yellow mass and heads downtown.

CUT TO:

188C EXT. DOWNTOWN COFFEE SHOP NOON

Travis' cab is parked near a neighborhood Bickford's.

CUT TO:

LATE BREAKFAST

189 TRAVIS and IRIS are having late breakfast at a middle-class EAST SIDE COFFEE SHOP. It is about 1:30 P.M.

IRIS is dressed more sensibly, wearing jeans and a maroon sweater. Her face is freshly washed and her hair combed out.

Seen this way, IRIS looks no different than any young girl in the big city. OTHER PATRONS of the coffee shop most likely assume she is having lunch with her big brother.

They are both having an All-American breakfast: ham and eggs, large glasses of orange juice, coffee.

Outside here environment, Iris seems the more pathetic, She seems unsure, schizy, unable to hold a subject for more than thirty seconds. Her gestures are too broad, her voice too mannered. We sympathize with Travis' paternal response. This girl is in trouble.

IRIS
...and after that Sport and I just started hanging out....

TRAVIS
Where is home?

Iris removes her large blue-tinted sunglasses and fishes through her bag for another pair.

IRIS
I got so many sunglasses. I couldn't live without my shades, man. I must have twelve pair of shades.

She finds a pink-tinted pair and puts them on.

189 CONTD

TRAVIS
Where?

IRIS
Pittsburgh.

TRAVIS
I ain't ever been there, but it don't seem like such a bad place.

IRIS
(voice rising)
Why do you want me to go back to my parents? They hate me. Why do you think I split? There ain't nothin there.

TRAVIS
But you can't live like this. It's hell. Girls should live at home.

IRIS
(playfully)
Didn't you ever hear of women's lib?

There is a short, quick silence; TRAVIS' eyes retract. He goes on:

TRAVIS
(ignoring her question)
Young girls are supposed to dress up, go to school, play with boys, you know, that kinda stuff.

Iris places a large gob of jam on her unbuttered toast and folds the bread over like a hotdog.

IRIS
God, are <u>you</u> square.

TRAVIS
(releasing pent-up tension)
At least I don't walk the streets like a skunk pussy. I don't screw and fuck with killers and junkies.

IRIS motions him to lower his voice.

IRIS
Who's a killer?

89 CONTINUED

TRAVIS
That fella "Sport" looks like a killer to me.

IRIS
He never killed nobody. He's a Libra.

TRAVIS
Huh?

IRIS
I'm a Libra too. That's why we get along so well.

TRAVIS
He looks like a killer.

IRIS
I think Cancer's make the best lovers. My whole family are air signs.

TRAVIS
He shoots dope too.

IRIS
What makes you so high and mighty? Did you ever look at your own eyeballs in a mirror. You don't get eyes like that from.....

TRAVIS
He's worse than an animal. Jail's too good for scum like that.

There is a brief silence. Iris mind continued to whirl at 78 rpms. She seems to have three subjects on her mind at a time. She welcomes this opportunity to unburden herself.

IRIS
Rock music died in 1970, that's what I think. Before that it was fantastic. I can tell you that. Everybody was crashing, hanging out at the Fillmore. Me and my girlfriend Ann used to go up the fire escape, you know? It was unbelievable. Rock Stars everywhere. The Airplane--that's my group, man. All Libras. But now everybody's split or got sick or busted. I think I'll move to one of those communes in Vermont, you know? That's where all the smart ones went. I stayed here.

TRAVIS
I never been to a commune. I don't know. I saw pictures in
(more)

189 CONTD (3)

TRAVIS (Contd)
a magazine, and it didn't look very clean to me.

IRIS
Why don't you come to a commune with me?

TRAVIS
Me? I could never go to a place like that.

IRIS
Why not?

TRAVIS
(hesitant)
I ... I don't get along with people like that.

IRIS
You a scorpian? That's it. You're a scorpian. I can tell.

TRAVIS
Besides, I've got to stay here.

IRIS
Why?

TRAVIS
I've got something important to do. I can't leave.

IRIS
What's so important?

TRAVIS
I can't say -- it's top secret. I'm doing something for the Army. The cab thing is just part time.

IRIS
You a narc?

TRAVIS
Do I look like a narc?

IRIS
Yeah.

189 CONTD (4)

TRAVIS breaks out in his big infectious grin, and IRIS joins his laughter.

IRIS
God, I don't know who's weirder, you or me.

TRAVIS
(pause)
What are you going to do about Sport and that old bastard?

IRIS
When?

TRAVIS
When you leave.

IRIS
Just leave 'em. There's plenty of other girls.

TRAVIS
You just gonna leave 'em?

IRIS
(astonished)
What should I do? Call the cops?

TRAVIS
Cops don't do nothin.

IRIS
Sport never treated me bad, honest. Never beat me up once.

TRAVIS
You can't leave 'em to do the same to other girls. You should get rid of them.

IRIS
How?

TRAVIS
(shrugs)
I don't know. Just should, though.
(a beat)
Somebody should kill 'em. Nobody'd miss 'em.

189 CONTD (5)

IRIS
(taken back)
God. I know where they should have a commune for you. They should have a commune for you at Bellevue.

TRAVIS
(apologetic/sheepish)
I'm sorry, Iris., I didn't mean that.

IRIS
(sympathetically)
You're not much with girls, are you?

TRAVIS
(thinks)
Well, Iris, I look at it this way. A lot of girls come into my cab, some of them very beautiful. And I figure all day long men have been after them: trying to touch them, talk to them, ask them out. And they hate it. So I figure the best I can do for them is not to bother them at all. So I don't say a thing. I pretend I'm not even there. I figure they'll understand that and appreciate me for it.

It takes IRIS a moment to digest this pure example of negative thinking: I am loved to the extent I do not exist.

IRIS
Do you really think I should go to the commune?

TRAVIS
I think you should go home, but otherwise I think you should go. It would be great for you. You have to get away from here. The city's a sewer, you gotta get out of it.

189 CONT

Mumbling something about her "shades" again, IRIS fishes through her bag until she comes up with another 99¢ pair of sunglasses and puts them on. She likes these better, she decides.

IRIS
Sure you don't want to come with me?

TRAVIS
I can't. Otherwise, I would.

IRIS
I sure hate to go alone..

TRAVIS
I'll give you the money to go. I don't want you to take any from those guys.

IRIS
You don't have to.

TRAVIS
I want to -- what else can I do with my money?
(thinks)
You may not see me again--for awhile.

IRIS
What do you mean?

190 OMITTED

191 CLOSE on TRAVIS:

TRAVIS
My work may take me out of New York.
CUT TO:

191A IRIS' ROOM - DAY

Sport stands beside the bed.

SPORT
What's the matter, baby, don't you feel right?

IRIS is wearing her blue-tinted shades.

IRIS
It's my stomach. I got the flu.

191A CONT

IRIS
Honest, Sport.

Sport puts some slow soul music on the stereo and begins to dance with her.

SPORT
You're just tired, baby. You just need your man. I am, your man, you know. You are my woman. I wouldn't be nothing without you.

I know this may not mean anything to you, baby, but sometimes I get so emotional, sometimes I think, I wish every man could have what I have now, that every woman could be loved the way I love you. I wish every man could be as happy with his woman as I am with you now. I go home and I think what it would be without you, and then I thank God for you. I think to myself, man, you are so lucky. You got a woman who loves you, who needs you, a woman who keeps you strong. It's just you and me. I'm nothing without you. I can go like this forever and ever. We can do it, baby. You and me. Just you and me.

IRIS smiles. She is happy. The music rises.

CUT TO:

GOD'S LONELY MAN

192 FIRING RANGE - DAY

TRAVIS stands at the firing range blasting the .44 Magnum with a rapid-fire vengeance.

He sets down one gun, picks up the next, then the next. Quickly reloading, he fires again.

192 CONTD

The targets spin and dance under his barrage. The piercing sound of GUNSHOTS ring through the air.

CUT TO:

193 INT. APARTMENT

TRAVIS is again writing at the table. His western shirt is open, exposing his bare chest.

A note of despair and doom has entered into TRAVIS' normally monotone narration voice: this will be the last entry in his diary.

TRAVIS (V.O.)
My whole life has pointed in one direction. I see that now. There never has been any choice for me.

CUT TO:

194 LENGTHY P.O.V. SHOT from TRAVIS' taxi: we see New York's nightlife as TRAVIS sees it. CAMERA TRACKS down midtown sidewalks in SLIGHTLY SLOW MOTION. There we see:

195 COUPLES, walking in SLOWING MOTION, young couples, middle-aged couples, old couples, hookers and johns, girlfriends, boyfriends, business friends -- the whole world matched up in pairs, and TRAVIS left wandering alone in the night.

Others would notice the breasts, the asses, the faces, but not TRAVIS: he notices the girl's hand that rubs the hair on her boyfriend's neck, the hand that hangs lightly on his shoulder, the nuzzling kiss in the ear.

TRAVIS (V.O.) (Contd)
Loneliness has followed me all my life. The life of loneliness pursues me wherever I go: in bars, cars, coffee shops, theaters, stores, sidewalks. There is no escape. I am God's lonely man.

196 MATCHCUT to P.O.V.: another neighborhood, LATER IN THE NIGHT. Still in SLIGHTLY SLOW MOTION.

197 The CROWDS are more sparse here. the streets darker. A JUNKIE shudders in a doorway, a WINO pukes into a trash can, a STREET-WALKER meets a prospective CLIENT.

97 CONTINUED

TRAVIS (V.O.) (CONTINUED)
I am not a fool. I will no longer fool myself. I will no longer let myself fall apart, become a joke and object of ridicule. I know there is no longer any hope. I cannot continue this hollow, empty fight. I must sleep. What hope is there for me?

CUT TO:

98 INT. APARTMENT

TRAVIS, his shirt fastened, stands beside table.

99 C.U.: He lays a brief hand-written letter on the table. We read it.

Dear Iris,
This monev should be enough for your trip. By the time you read this I will be dead.

Travis

TRAVIS stacks five crisp hundred dollar bills beside the letter, folds them up with the letter, and puts them into an envelope.

00 TIMECUT" A SHORT WHILE LATER. TRAVIS has cleaned up his apartment. Everything is neat and orderly.

01 CAMERA PANS across room: the mattress is bare and flattened out, the floor is spotless, the cans and bottles of food and pills put out of sight. The wall is still covered with Palantine political paraphernalia, but when we reach the desk we see only four items there: an open diary and three loaded revolvers: .44, .38, .25.

02 TRAVIS, freshly shaved and neatly dressed, stands in the middle of his clean room. The empty holster hangs on his shoulder. Metal .25 gliders can be seen under the slit in his right sleeve. He turns toward table.

CUT TO"

02A TRAVIS, envelope in hand, closes the door behind him and walks down the corridor.

He passes a ajar door and we are surprized to see the room is empty--and trashed. Travis lives in a decaying, if not condemned, building.

3 EXT.
TRAVIS places the envelope to IRIS in his mail box.

204 BACK IN APARTMENT. CAMERA CLOSES ON revolvers lying on the table in neat array.

CUT TO:

THERE IS AN ASSASSIN

FADE IN:

205 SOUND of a political rally: cheering, laughing, a band playing, talking.

AFTERNOON. A CROWD of about 500 PERSONS is assembled before a platform outside a Brooklyn union hall. A DIXIELAND BAND is playing on the platform.

206 C.U. CHARLE PALANTINE's feet climb out of a limousine. There is a ROAR from the nearby CROWD.

PALANTINE, a bulky SECRET SERVICE MAN to the right and left of him, pushes his way through the CROWD toward the platform. Still cameras click, and TV cameras purr.

207 SLIGHT TIMECUT: PALANTINE is speaking on the platform.

CUT TO:

208 TRAVIS' empty taxi sits parked a few blocks away from rally. At this distance, the rally sounds are almost indistinguishable.

209 C.U. of TRAVIS' boots walking. They make their way past one person, then two, then a cluster of three or four. SOUNDS of rally increase.

210 We see a FULL FIGURE SHOT of TRAVIS: he is standing alone in an opening near the fringes of the CROWD.

TRAVIS looks like the most suspicious human being alive. His hair is cropped short, he wears mirror-reflecting glasses. His face is pallid and drained of color, his lips are pursed and drawn tight. He looks from side to side. One can now see the full effect of TRAVIS' lack of sleep and sufficient diet -- he looks sick and frail.

Even though it is a warm June day, TRAVIS is bundled up in a shirt, sweater and Army jacket buttoned from top to bottom. Under his jacket are several large lumps, causing his upper torso to look larger than it should He is slightly hunched over and his hands shoved into his pockets.

Anyone scanning the crowd would immediately light upon TRAVIS and think, "There is an assassin."

210 CONTD

TRAVIS pulls the vial of red pills from his pocket and swallows a couple.

CUT TO:

211 SECRET SERVICE MAN standing beside the platform, scanning the CROWD. It is the same SECRET SERVICE MAN TRAVIS spoke to at the first rally. TOM, dressed in a conservative suit, stands beside him.

212 PALANTINE is wrapping up his short speech:

PALANTINE
... and with your help we will go on to victory at the polls Tuesday.
(applause)

213 TRAVIS begins moving up into the crowd.

214 PALANTINE (Contd)
On to victory in Miami Beach next month
(building applause)
and on to victory next November!

PALANTINE steps back, smiling and receiving the applause. Then, nodding, at the SECRET SERVICE MAN he descends the stairs and prepares to work his way through the CROWD.

215 TRAVIS unbuttons the middle two buttons of his jacket, opening access to his holster. With the other hand he checks the .44 hooked behind his back.

216 PALANTINE smiles and shakes a few of the many hands outstretched toward him.

217 The SECRET SERVICE MAN, scanning the CROWD, spots something that interests him. He looks closely.

218 SECRET SERVICE MAN'S P.O.V.: TRAVIS, his face intense, pushes his way through the CROWD.

219 PALANTINE works his way through crowds and cameras.

220 SECRET SERVICE MAN motions to SECOND SECRET SERVICE MAN and points in TRAVIS' direction.

221 TRAVIS slips his hand into his jacket.

222 The SECOND SECRET SERVICE MAN converges on TRAVIS from the side.

223 TRAVIS and PALANTINE draw closer to each other.

224 SECRET SERVICE MAN, walking just behind PALANTINE, grabs the candidate's hand and pulls him backward. PALANTINE looks sharply back at SECRET SERVICE MAN who motions for him to take a slightly altered route.

225 TRAVIS sees this: his eyes meet the SECRET SERVICE MAN's. He recognizes the situation. To his right he spots the SECOND SECRET SERVICE MAN.

226 TRAVIS' eyes meet PALANTINE's: candidate and would-be assassin exchange quick glances.

TRAVIS hastily works his way back through the CROWD. He hears the SECRET SERVICE MAN's voice call out:

SECRET SERVICE MAN
Detain that man!

227 OVERHEAD SHOT reveals TRAVIS has the jump on his pursuers. He is breaking free of the CROWD while they are still mired in it.

228 TRAVIS, free of his pursuers, quickly makes his way down the sidewalks. The SECRET SERVICE MEN look futilely about.

229 TRAVIS jumps in his cab. Sweat covers his face.

CUT TO:

TOWARD THE KILL

The film is moving fast now; it pushes hard and straight toward its conclusion. We're moving toward the kill.

230 LATE AFTERNOON. TRAVIS' taxi skids around a corner and speeds into Manhattan.

231 OMITTED

232 TRAVIS, stripped to the waist, walks back and forth across his INT. APARTMENT, wiping his torso with a bath towel.

TRAVIS begins dressing:

-- He straps the Army combat knife to his calf.

-- He reflexes the metal gl[illegible]ers and the Colt .25 on his right forearm.

233 INTERCUT: SPORT stands in his doorway on the LOWER EAST SIDE shot with LONG DISTANCE LENS. It is EARLY EVENING.

234 INTERCUT: A pudgy middle-aged white PRIVATE COP walks up to SPORT. The two men laugh, slap each other on the back and exchange a soul shake. They discuss a little private business and the PRIVATE COP walks off in the direction of IRIS' apartment.

235 -- TRAVIS straps on holster and fits the .38 Special into it.

236 INTERCUT: PRIVATE COP walks down block.

237 -- TRAVIS hooks the huge Magnum into the back of his belt. He puts on his Army jacket and walks out the door.

238 INTERCUT: PRIVATE COP turns up darkened stairway to IRIS' apartment.

239 NIGHT has fallen: TRAVIS' taxi careens down 10th Ave. He speeds, honks, accelerates quickly. The glare of speeding yellow and red lights flash through the night.

240 TRAVIS' P.O.V.: PEDESTRIAN attempts to flag down TRAVIS' taxi, but quickly steps back up on the curb when he sees TRAVIS has no intention of stopping for anything.

241 INTERCUT: SPORT maintains his post in the dark doorway. He waves to a GIRL who passes, and she waves back.

242 TRAVIS' taxi screeches to a stop and parks obliquely against the curb.

CUT TO:

THE SLAUGHTER

243 TRAVIS walks down the block to the doorway where SPORT stands. CAMERA TRACKS with TRAVIS.

Without slowing, TRAVIS walks up to SPORT and puts his arm on his shoulder in a gesture of friendliness.

TRAVIS
Hey, Sport. How are things?

SPORT
(shrugs)
O.K., cowboy.

243 CONTD

TRAVIS
(needling him)
How are things in the pimp business, hey Sport?

SPORT
What's going on?

TRAVIS
I'm here to see Iris.

SPORT
Iris?

TRAVIS pushes SPORT back into the dark recesses of the corridor.

SPORT
Wha — ?

TRAVIS
Yeah, Iris. You know anybody by that name?

SPORT
No.
(a beat)
Hillbilly, you'd better get your wise ass outa here and quick, or you're gonna be in trouble.

TRAVIS is being propelled by an inner force, a force which takes him past the boundaries of reason and self-control.

TRAVIS
(restrained anger)
You carry a gun?

SPORT looks into TRAVIS' eyes, saying nothing: he realizes the seriousness of the situation.

TRAVIS pulls his .38 Special and holds it on SPORT, pushing him even further back against the wall.

TRAVIS
Get it.

SPORT
(submissive)
Hey, mister, I don't know what's going on here. This don't make any sense.

243 CONTD (2)

TRAVIS
(demanding)
Show it to me.

SPORT reluctantly pulls a .32 caliber pistol (a "purse gun") from his pocket and holds it limply.

TRAVIS sticks his .38 into SPORT's gut and discharges it. There is a muffled blast, followed by a muted scream of pain.

TRAVIS
Now suck on that.

Agony and shock cross SPORT's face as he slumps to the floor. TRAVIS turns and walks away before SPORT even hits.

244 As TRAVIS walks away, SPORT can be seen struggling in the b.g.

TRAVIS, his gun slipped into his jacket, walks quickly up the sidewalk.

245 AROUND THE CORNER, TRAVIS walks into the darkened stairway leading to IRIS' apartment.

246 As he walks up the stairs, TRAVIS pulls the .44 Magnum from behind his back and transfers the .38 Special to his left hand. He walks up the steps, a pistol dangling from each hand.

247 AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS, TRAVIS spots THE OLD MAN sitting at the far end of the dark corridor. THE OLD MAN starts to get up when TRAVIS discharges the mighty .44 at him. BLAAM! The hallway reverberates with shock waves and gun powder.

248 THE OLD MAN staggers at the end of the corridor: his right hand has been blown off at the forearm.

249 There is the sharp SOUND of a GUNSHOT behind TRAVIS: his face grimaces in pain. A bullet has ripped through the left side of his neck. Blood flows over his left shoulder.

TRAVIS' .44 flies into the air.

250 TRAVIS looks down the stairway: there SPORT lies choking in a puddle of his own blood. He has struggled long enough to fire one shot.

251 Falling, TRAVIS drills another .38 slug into SPORT's back but SPORT is already dead.

TRAVIS slumps to his knees. Down the corridor THE OLD MAN with a bloody stump is struggling toward him. TRAVIS turns his .38 toward THE OLD MAN.

252 The door to No. 2 opens: IRIS' scream is heard in the b.g. The bulky frame of the PRIVATE COP fills the doorway. His blue shirt is open, in his hand hangs a .38 service revolver.

The PRIVATE COP raises his gun and shoots TRAVIS. TRAVIS, blood gushing from his right shoulder, sinks to the floor. His .38 clangs down the stairs.

253 THE OLD MAN grows closer. TRAVIS smashes his right arm against the wall, miraculously, the small Colt .25 glides down his forearm into his palm.

254 TRAVIS fills the PRIVATE COP's face full of bullet holes.

255 The PRIVATE COP, SCREAMING, crashes back into the room.

256 THE OLD MAN crashes atop TRAVIS. The .25 falls from TRAVIS' hand.

Both men are bleeding profusely as they thrash into IRIS' room. IRIS hides behind the old red velvet sofa, her face frozen in fright.

TRAVIS, trapped under the heavy OLD MAN, reaches down with his right hand and pulls the combat knife from his right calf.

Just as TRAVIS draws back the knife, THE OLD MAN brings his huge left palm crashing down on TRAVIS: THE OLD MAN's palm is impaled on the knife.

OLD MAN SCREAMS in pain.

Police SIRENS are heard in b.g.

With great effort, TRAVIS turns over, pinning THE OLD MAN to the floor. The bloody knife blade sticks through his upturned hand.

TRAVIS reaches over with his right hand and picks up the revolver of the now dead PRIVATE COP.

TRAVIS hoists himself up and sticks the revolver into THE OLD MAN's mouth.

256 CONTD

THE OLD MAN's voice is full of pain and ghastly fright:

OLD MAN
Don't kill me! Don't kill me!

IRIS screams in b.g. TRAVIS looks up:

IRIS
Don't kill him, Travis! Don't kill him!

TRAVIS fires the revolver, blowing the back of THE OLD MAN's head off and silencing his protests.

257 The police SIRENS screech to a halt. SOUND of police officers running up the stairs.

TRAVIS struggles up and collapses on the red velvet sofa, his blood-soaked body blending with the velvet.

IRIS retreats in fright against the far wall.

258 First uniformed POLICE OFFICER rushes in room, drawn gun in hand. Other POLICEMEN can be heard running up the stairs.

259 TRAVIS looks helplessly up at the OFFICER. He forms his bloody hand into a pistol, raises it to his forehead and, his voice croaking in pain, makes the sound of a pistol discharging.

TRAVIS
Pgghew! Pgghew!

Out of breath fellow OFFICERS join the first POLICEMAN. They survey the room.

TRAVIS' head slumps against the sofa.

260 IRIS is huddled in the corner, shaking.

LIVE SOUND CEASES.

OVERHEAD SLOW MOTION TRACKING SHOT surveys the damage:

261a -- from IRIS shaking against the blood-spattered wall

b -- to TRAVIS blood-soaked body lying on the sofa

c -- to THE OLD MAN with half a head, a bloody stump for one hand and a knife sticking out the other

261 CONTD

d -- to POLICE OFFICERS staring in amazement

e -- to the PRIVATE COP's bullet-ridden face trapped near the doorway

f -- to puddles of blood and a lonely .44 Magnum lying on the hallway carpet.

g -- down the blood-speckled stairs on which lies a nickle-plated .38 Smith and Wesson Special

h -- to the foot of the stairs where SPORT's body is hunched over a pool of blood and a small .32 lies near his hand

262 -- to CROWDS huddled around the doorway, held back by POLICE OFFICERS

-- past red flashing lights, running POLICEMEN and parked police cars

-- to the ongoing nightlife of the Lower East Side, curious but basically unconcerned, looking then heading its own way.

SCREENWRITER'S NOTE: The screenplay has been moving at a reasonably realistic level until this prolonged slaughter. The slaughter itself is a gory extension of violence, more surreal than real.

The slaughter is the moment TRAVIS has been heading for all his life, and where this screenplay has been heading for over 85 pages. It is the release of all that cumulative pressure; it is a reality unto itself. It is the psychopath's Second Coming.

FADE TO:

LETTER FROM PITTSBURGH

FADE IN:

263 EXT. TRAVIS' APARTMENT - DAY

It is EARLY FALL. The trees are losing their leaves.

CUT TO:

264 SLOW TRACKING SHOT across INT. APARTMENT. Room appears pretty much the same, although there is a new portable TV and an inexpensive easy chair.

264 CONTD

visual	audio
TRACK begins at table and works across room to the mattress. We see these items: -- On the table rests the diary, closed. A desk calendar stands on the table: it is October. -- Across the wall where the Palantine clippings once hung there are now a series of new newspaper clippings. Right to left, they read: 1. The first is a full back page from the N.Y. Daily News. Headline reads: "CABBIE BATTLES GANGSTERS". There are large photos of police standing in IRIS' room after the slaughter, and a picture of TRAVIS' cabbie mug shot. 2. Underneath there is a more discreet clipping without photo from the N.Y. Times. Two-column headline reads: "Cabbie Shootout, Three Dead." 3. A follow-up story from the News. Two-column photo shows plain middle-aged couple sitting in middle-class living room. Two-column headline reads: "Parents Express Shock, Gratitude." 4. A two-column Daily News story without photo. Headline reads: "Taxi-Driver Hero to Recover."	THROUGHOUT THE TRACK, we hear the voice of a middle-aged uneducated man reading in voice over. It is the voice of IRIS' FATHER and he is reading a letter he sent to TRAVIS, and which TRAVIS has tacked to his wall. IRIS' FATHER (V.O.) Dear Mr. Bickle, I can't say how happy Mrs. Steensma and I were to hear that you are well and recuperating. We tried to visit you at the hospital when we were in New York to pick up Iris, but you were still in a coma. There is no way we can repay you for returning our Iris to us. We thought we had lost her, but now our lives are full again. Needless to say, you are something of a hero around this household. I'm sure you want to know about Iris. She is back in school and working hard. The transition has been very hard for her, as you can well imagine, but we have taken steps to see she never has cause to run away again. In conclusion, Mrs. Steensma and I would like to again thank you from the bottom of our hearts. (MORE)

264 CONTD (2)

visual	audio
5. A one-column two-paragraph News story stuck on an obscure page. Headline reads: "Cabbie Returns to Job."	IRIS' FATHER (V.O.) (Contd) Unfortunately, we cannot afford to come to New York again to thank you in person, or we surely would. But if you should ever come to Pittsburgh, you would find yourself a most welcome guest in our home.
— At the end of the clippings, a letter is tacked to the wall. It is a simple letter hand-written on plain white paper. The handwriting makes a conscious effort to appear neat and orderly. We recognize from some of the words that it is the same letter that is being read in voice over.	Our deepest thanks, Burt and Ivy Steensma
— When we finally arrive at the mattress, we find it is barren. A pillow and blanket (new purchases) are folded at the head of the mattress.	

CUT TO:

OLD FRIENDS

265 EXT. PLAZA HOTEL - NIGHT

Four cabs stand in the waiting line in front of the hotel.

266 Near the entrance, TRAVIS and WIZARD stand in the light talking.

TRAVIS' hair is almost fully grown back to its normal length. TRAVIS wears the same clothes -- cowboy boots, jeans, western shirt, Army jacket -- but he isn't wearing a gun. There is a thick scar on the left side of his neck.

Wizard is speaking.

WIZARD

A private-owner wanted to swap wheels. Now my tires were brand new. "Give me a couple days," I says.

CHARLIE T. parks his cab in line and walks towards TRAVIS and WIZARD.

CHARLIE T.

Howdy Wizard, Killer.

266 CONTD

CHARLIE T. points his pistol/finger at TRAVIS, fires, says "Pow" and laughs.

CHARLIE T. (Contd)
(casual joking)
Don't mess with the Killer.

TRAVIS
(smiles)
Hey Charlie T.

WIZARD
Howsit, Charlie?
(pause)
Hey Travis, I think you gota fare.

They all turn. P.O.V. of DOORMAN closing rear door of TRAVIS' taxi.

TRAVIS
Shit.
(runs off)

CHARLIE T.
Take it slow, Killer.

TRAVIS waves back to CHARLIE T. and WIZARD as he runs around cab and jumps in the driver's seat.

267 TRAVIS' taxi pulls away.

268 C.U. TRAVIS at the wheel. A FEMALE VOICE says:

FEMALE VOICE
34 East 56th Street.

269 TRAVIS recognizes the voice. He looks in the rear-view mirror: It is BETSY.

TRAVIS says nothing: he heads toward 56th Street.

After a silence, BETSY speaks:

BETSY
Hello, Travis.

TRAVIS
Hello, Betsy.

There is an uneasy pause.

269 CONTD

TRAVIS
I see where Palantine got the nomination.

BETSY
Yes. It won't be long now. Seventeen days.

TRAVIS
Well, I hope he wins.

There is another pause.

BETSY
(concerned)
How are you, Travis? I read about you in the papers.

TRAVIS
Oh, I got over that. It was nothing, really. The papers always blow these things up.
(a beat)
A little stiffness. That'll go away. I just sleep more, that's all.

270 EXT.

TRAVIS' taxi pulls up to 34 East 56th Street.

TRAVIS
Here we are.

BETSY digs in her purse.

TRAVIS
(protesting)
No, no, please. This fare's on me. Please.

BETSY
Thank you, Travis.

BETSY gets out of the cab and stands by the right front window, which is open.

TRAVIS prepares to drive away.

BETSY
Travis?

270 CONTD

TRAVIS
Yeah.

BETSY
Maybe I'll see you again sometime,huh?

TRAVIS
(thin smile)
Sure.

271 BETSY steps away from the curb and TRAVIS drives off. She watches his taxi.

272 CAMERA FOLLOWS TRAVIS' taxi as it slowly disappears down 56th Street.

SUPERIMPOSE TITLES: THE END